











## STANDING AT THE CROSS ROADS



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*An Analytical Approach to the Basic Problems  
of Psychosocial Integration*



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## ΑΠΟΛΟΓΙΑ

THIS book is not intended to arouse an urge for national integration, if it be found wanting, nor to buttress faltering patriotic sentiments. The subject of national integration is bound to evoke a natural response in the Indian, and consequently, contributions on this subject have grown in variety and numbers. However, it is not difficult to see that there exists a natural temptation to adhere to the traditional perspective in this field. Certain ideas by virtue of repetition seem to have gained in strength and acceptability. But then the traditional outlook is akin to looking at the world with other people's eyes. Conformity undoubtedly has its own comforts, but it is liable to deprive the viewer of the opportunity of looking at the world with his own eyes. The author has ventured in this essay to review the problems of social and national integration in a detached manner unbiased by traditional or other viewpoints while viewing these from different angles. Efforts have been made to collate evidence from more than one source without losing sight of the contemporary human being and his propensities and motivations, for, after all, he is the main character in this drama. The author has sought to give as much importance to the determining of the conditions guiding his actions and this he has endeavoured to pursue with the mental approach of a student of human behaviour and who is, also, desirous of inviting discussions on the subject of the day.

The author would like to take this opportunity of expressing sincere thanks to the Librarian and Deputy Librarian of the University of Bombay and also to the Library Assistants of the Departmental Libraries for extending all facilities. He is particularly grateful to Mr. D. N. Marshall, the Librarian, for offering unfailing help whenever there arose an occasion, and there were plenty. He is also indebted to Prof. G. C. Bannerjee, Professor of English, University of Bombay, for readily agreeing to revise some of the chapters in this book. He recalls with pleasure the

occasions he has enjoyed in discussing the different aspects of the main theme of the book with men well known at their own stations. However, the author would hasten to add that the responsibility of the statements made, the views expressed in this book, as also the errors committed, is entirely his own.

N. MUKERJI

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## *Chapter 1*

### *INTRODUCTION*

THE TRAIL OF progress bears many more ma and semicolons than of full stops. Science as it meanders in its course leaves behind more queries and questions than it is actually capable of solving. It is quite true that some of the answers, may be a few of them, prove highly impressive and the popular mind with a sigh of relief views these as distant signals indicating the approach of a destination. To one who is eager enough to look beyond, the station—not the signal—comes as a mirage. The increasing number of journals devoted to science and subjects requiring scientific scrutiny bear testimony to this statement. What is true of science is equally applicable to all branches of human knowledge and awareness provided efforts are made with freedom to solve the problem and not to dissolve it. The International Labour Organization for instance is endeavouring to solve various problems arising in the field of labour employed in industry, and these problems are there demanding sustained efforts to find solutions. On the other hand in Germany in the thirties Hitler had just dissolved the problem, no one was free to raise any question, and problems in the field of labour ceased to exist. So we see, if we are prepared to accept facts at their face value and keep in abeyance the natural temptation to obtrude our personal attitudes in the interpretation of facts and do not strangle man's natural quest for knowledge, problems in the sphere of man's progress will create problems rather than bring a sort of perpetual quiescent stage following a final solution.<sup>1</sup>

During the British rule in India, particularly during the latter part culminating in the end phase, national integration as a

social problem was hardly considered worth reckoning with, at any rate that was the fond view of the politicians; it was a minor issue no doubt created by the then foreign rule and this trend in thinking acted as a sedative. Anyway the apparent lack of cohesion among communities was not viewed with due concern; symptomatic reactions emerging here and there were given a cursory glance and were then ignored. Any demonstration of intra-community pull of feelings exhibited now and then and the lack of evenness was experienced though not recognized; it was given a minor place in our thinking and acting and this perhaps was natural since much larger issues then loomed on the horizon.

This is not a text book of history or politics, so we will avoid going into details but it is well known that 1857 was the year when realization had dawned in the minds of the then rulers that a unified India would prove a dangerous India. May be the idea lay dormant long before that but the upheaval in the middle of the nineteenth century had laid bare the truth. Then there followed systematic efforts to dissociate one group of people from another by raising invisible barriers in the educational, social and economic fields. All the potential sources of dissension and discord were duly exploited. This process continued relentlessly, sometimes with vigour, as in Wellesley's and Curzon's time, more often with a certain amount of benevolent subtlety. But then all this did not mean that withdrawal of the British from the scene was to lead as a natural corollary, to a bridging of the gaps; this it is feared would be a doctrinaire approach, a perspective lacking in scientific insight. Nonetheless this attitude continued to prevail in our thoughts and deeds for quite some time after 1947 and realization of the problems crept on us slowly and its cognizance grew in depth so much so that in 1961 alone some four hundred odd books and articles were published on the subject of integration. Legislators, educationists and philosophers, social workers, and those who hardly did any work, freely expressed their views and this was all to the good. However, when too many palliatives are suggested for an ailment it is doubtful if any could be regarded as specific and truly efficacious. What is rather surprising, and disheartening, is that not one serious attempt until now has been made to undertake a survey of this all-important issue by responsible

persons to examine the subterranean flow of thought among the people. Yet this idea is not something radical. Every five years we do approach the people for their opinion as to who should be asked to govern us. In the regions where there are universities teaching psychology, sociology or social anthropology printed questionnaires frequently appear making inquiries into one social problem or another but nothing up to now has been done in this important field. The resulting picture if anything is rather bizarre—chaotic would be more accurate but less polite.

# II

It might have looked decorous to open this section with a suitable quotation but it is not easy to decide as to whom to quote since it is agreed on all sides that the country is threatened by the worst foe, the internal foe damaging our integrated living. The pernicious hood of sectarianism is no doubt rising and it is feared that it may strike at the root of our precious heritage—our freedom. If this perilous attitude were allowed to develop unabated and the concomitant feelings to precipitate further, all that we have won with blood and tears over a century will be thrown into oblivion, thousands of precious lives dedicated to the great cause will be rendered meaningless. Thus is created a vague sense of apprehension dormant in the minds of all who live in this country and love it—and who doesn't?

Words are vehicles for thought but sometimes prove gawky when a word fails to project the exact silhouette of an idea. A few illustrations. What precisely is meant by integration? What are the characteristics of integrated living? On what factors may be based the possible disintegration: language, culture, religion, status attained by socio-economic conditions? Are we to presume that in the past we enjoyed integrated living which we are losing now, or is it that the signs of disintegration are of recent origin? If India was integrated in pre-1947 era could we then assume, over-riding historical facts may be, that that was the picture of India in the historically remote past? and so on and on. Out of all these questions we will pick up a few for closer scrutiny in the following pages. However we have to bear in mind that we have before us an issue in which are imbedded ideas partly political, sociological, psychological and of course

historical and it may not prove easy to construct a clearly integrated view but an honest attempt will be made.

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'Integration', according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, means 'to complete (imperfect things) by addition of parts into whole'. Used in this sense and in the present context the prevalent expression, national integration, may signify the process of constituting a homogeneous nationality which may not have yet attained a consummate state. We may then have to presume that a homogeneous nationality did not exist in the past, that efforts are continuously being made to unify the constituent communities to give a shape of a homogeneity, to be labelled Indian, that this process has succeeded to an extent but has halted at an incomplete stage. This is one meaning that can be construed. There is scope for yet another interpretation, viz. the one integrated nation that *was* Indian for one reason or another is now vitiated by disruption and disintegration. The first analysis accepts the disintegrated state that was in the past whereas the second analysis leaves the mischief at the doors of the present generation. Both require closer scrutiny and it is not easy either. The path of history is strewn with the dead leaves of facts. It is for the person concerned to decide what he may do with these facts—the responsibility of interpretation is his. To say that it is 'historical truth' actually means historical truth to the person using the tools of history. Mark Twain had observed: ask three persons to narrate the accident that they all had witnessed and on listening to them you will avoid history. May be there is some truth in it.

We have however left untouched the crux of the problem: Integration of what? people of course. But each person has multiple facets and it is not necessary for all these facets to be used in matters of integration. A person may be father and husband at home, lawyer in the court, he may be Hindu in religious belief and radical in political thinking, he may have hobbies and pastimes which he shares with a few. Now, when this person comes into contact with another person he may expose only one facet or a limited few. The links that bind a group of people into a community or nation are variegated indeed but not all the links may be put to use in forming a recog-

nized group. Language as a means of communication helps us to express ourselves before others. This language also crystallizes our likes and dislikes, gives shape to our thoughts and beliefs, our ways of thinking, our manner of living and many more things besides. Yet all these describe the different facets of the same man. Two persons may make use of the same language and yet remain psychologically remote from each other. Using the word integration, do we mean integration of one aspect, some aspects or all the aspects of the man?

Finally, it has to be admitted that a good deal of confusion has been caused in dealing with the problem by introducing into it a historical perspective. While discussing a subject which pertains to the present age we are permitted to use suitable yardsticks which may be relevant to the age. But the same yardstick may prove useless as a tool when used against the background of the distant past. Such an effort is liable to prove futile; there could not have been any expression in the ancient Greek or Sanskrit language corresponding to modern terms like 'nuclear fission' or 'genetic transmission', such expressions will inevitably have to be judged against modern ideas. Let us use another illustration. The ancient pattern of living left little occasion for conflicts arising between the husband and the wife. In India, and all over the world, there existed a tacit assumption that a woman must live under someone's protection—and it meant quite a few things—either of the father, husband or son. The wife on her part accepted the dictum as a natural corollary to her birth. It is only when the concept of freedom gradually came to be applicable to the weaker sex that women began to shed their weakness and a situation of conflict began to arise. The age of serfs, in Asia and Europe alike, accepted the principle of serfdom and the question of strife between the master and the serf seldom arose, and, if it did, it was regarded as an abnormal occasion and treated accordingly. What is of import here is that we should be mentally prepared to look upon the present age as different from the past. Ours is essentially an age of concord and harmony—an idea based on vastly different principles compared to the feudal age. Prior to our using expressions like unity or integration it is presumed that there are possibilities of the opposite forces existing and yet we endeavour to bring about an adjustment. We accept the sources of conflict and

facing the situation seek for solutions leading to concord and harmony. It is here that we find the modern approach rather different from the past. To insist that the sense of democracy, as we understand by the term today, prevailed in the Hindu or Muslim periods in India would distort the facts, and we shall have opportunity to test this assertion. The concept of modern democracy is of recent origin. At its initial stage the body of common laws offered opportunities to the common man to take a stand before the court when there arose a necessity against his master, and thus arose a source of strifes. We have now gone further. Modern India is witnessing something which never had existed in its past history. India has bestowed on its subjects rights inherent in citizenship which bears uncommonly potent force. Strifes consequently have grown numerous and varied and this we may assess from the plethora of cases standing in the courts of law involving fundamental, and non-fundamental, rights. The judges also use their initiative in bringing about concord sometimes by asking the parties to settle matters outside the court. Now, these rights, economical, social, religious or political, we had enjoyed never before. Consequently, to assess the present against the past would be something akin to comparing a pound of weight against a yard. This issue of changed values is one which may repeatedly occur in the subsequent chapters.

## *Chapter 2*

### *PROBLEMS REVIEWED*

TRANQUILITY in the social sphere was expected as natural corollary to follow after attaining independence. Yet, it was the reverse which was true and free India was born in a state of turmoil. The ugly incidents were accepted with laments as inevitable in the 'transition period'; but the transition period has since shown no sign of coming to a close. As early as in the late forties mild emotive eruptions began to grow gradually into vigours of passion. The northern people of a southern state wanted, to put it mildly, a sort of home-land of their own. Another state demanded one language to be imposed upon all the inhabitants although this state happens to be almost like an anthropological museum of languages. Elsewhere it was decided to pay off old scores against a certain caste which had dominated over other castes for centuries together. Those in authority at Delhi looked upon these peace wreckers with indolent eyes calling them miscreants, mad men, ignoramuses, but the tone was that of admonition of the boys-don't-misbehave type. Realization gradually dawned upon them that the symptoms of discord and dissension had deeper roots, and the stems and branches of the malady derived nourishment from sources not quite revealed. It was then that the relevant problems were taken up with a sense of responsibility and awareness.

The University Grants Commission should be congratulated for showing a pioneering spirit by taking initiative in this direction. In 1958 it extended invitation to hold a discussion to a number of persons engaged in studies in the humanities and also to men and women held in esteem for their sober views on matters related to social improvement and upliftment and subsequently

a report was published (1)\*. In 1961 the problem of national integration was discussed at a conference of Education Ministers (2) when a committee was formed with Sampurnanand as the chairman. This committee functioned under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Education and later published a comprehensive report embodying numerous suggestions (3). This committee certainly believed in acting in a comprehensive manner; it has offered as many as two hundred and thirteen suggestions embracing every possible sphere of education. It is to be wondered if the first and last thing in emotional integration lie solely in the field of education.

In the following pages we shall attempt to look at the problem in its diverse aspects but the endeavour should not remain dissociated from the attempts already made. We may have to look back and listen to what has already been said, though this need not necessarily be undertaken in a conformist spirit; progress after all does not always adhere to the lines drawn by common consent and convention.

While inaugurating the National Integration Conference, Dr. Radhakrishnan referred to the long unbroken tradition of Indian civilization. 'Geographically, India was described long ago as the country which is enclosed by the Himalayas in the north and the seas in the south. *Tam varsam bhāratam nāma bhārati yatra samatatiḥ*. (Those who dwell within these areas, whatever may be their creed or colour, whatever may be their religion, all belong to this country.) Even in early times', he reminded us, 'there was this sense of unity in the country. If you look into the Mahabharata, you will find there that almost all the representatives from the north and the extreme south are said to have been present at the Kurukshetra war'. Copiously he has quoted from the ancient scriptures to prove the *desirability* of unity and solidarity among the people inhabiting the land we call Bharat. He has mentioned Akbar's all-out efforts to bring about harmony among the people and dilated on *dharma*. 'National integration', he finally added, 'cannot be built by brick and mortar, by chisel and hammer. It has to grow silently in the minds and hearts of men. The only process is the process of education . . .' (1).

\* The italicized numerical denotes the reference cited at the end, and the figure on the right side of the dot represents the page number.



On similar lines have flown the discourses of Tarachand (4). Summarizing his first lecture he said: 'in their attitude of mind, culture, social ways and economic institutions, the Indian people possessed fundamental attributes of unity almost as ample as any in the contemporary world.' Again, 'whatever the differences in doctrines and rites, the two (the commoners among the Hindus and Muslims [N.M.]) joined together in all the life and activity of the village'. However, in his third lecture he had to admit sceptically that 'between the Pandits and Shastris on the one side, and the Maulavis and Ulema on the other, there was unfortunately little give and take. It is true that a few Muslim learned men acquired the knowledge of Sanskrit and a number of Sanskrit works were translated into Persian . . . yet this knowledge remained confined to the few'. I should hasten to make it clear that by quoting Dr. Radhakrishnan or Tarachand it is not my intention to adopt a critical attitude towards their views but to seek for a typical attitude displayed in this field of thinking. It is not difficult to see that the approach by and large is sentimental and this perhaps is the most common technique used for bringing about rapprochement.

One of the authors quoted above is a learned scholar in Indian philosophy while the other is reputed for his erudition in matters historical. Men with the breadth of knowledge that Dr. Radhakrishnan or Tarachand possesses can speak on their respective subjects for weeks and months and yet may hesitate to give a decisive view in their own fields of interest. The situation in which these statements were made could not have permitted them to digress into lengthy discourses and consequently they had to remain satisfied with a condensation of what they may have said from other platforms. Besides, under the force of circumstances their approach perforce had to be pragmatic rather than academic or analytic. Yet, it is feared that leaning heavily on the pragmatic point of view we may run the risk of not obtaining a faithful view. Let us look into the statements quoted above to see if the apprehension may find justification.

Firstly, though it may be tempting to compare the present with the remote past the venture may not offer correct assessment. It is rather hazardous to draw any decisive conclusion by comparing a modern society bearing the impact of industrial civilization with all its ramifications with a simple rural-like

community in the ancient or medieval past particularly when we know that history does not and cannot repeat itself. By way of illustration it may be pointed out that the rights of a citizen as granted in the Indian Constitution had no comparable counterpart in its past history. Again, the concept of the common man which is the essential foundation of democracy never existed either in the Vedic, Brahminical-Buddhistic period or in the reigns of the Muslim monarchs. We shall have to deal with this issue in further detail but it may be casually mentioned here that a monarch's subject in the distant past which has grown hoary with age and of which we are tempted to speak in nostalgic terms lived at the mercy of his lord and master. The social harmony in the two conditions may not be comparable. The past entailed acceptance under duress and constraint, the present demands concurrence on the basis of accord and equality. To compare the two states would inevitably lead to employing the method of analogy, which is not permissible in scientific analysis.

Secondly, the problem of integration is not unidimensional, it has more than one facet and this may be seen even in the meagre quotations referred to. While Dr. Radhakrishnan has spoken of the integration of communities differing in the socio-cultural spheres, Tarachand has discussed the communities differing mainly on religious grounds. In other words each community, like the individuals comprising each community, may bear different facets. Unless this fact is recognized, and the character of the community is analyzed against precise criteria any comparison may be rendered meaningless. What are those factors which are responsible for the formation of groups? Do these forces operate in a stereotyped manner or are they convertible? Since two or more groups can be formed even though the total population may belong to one paradigm of religion it stands to reason that religion is not an essential criterion in the emergence of groups of communities. Again, once these groups have branched out from one source and their identification established can they be expected to be brought back into their original state? Anyway, it would not be proper to ignore these issues calling for attention. It is feared that overlooking a scientific approach to these problems, accepting the risks entailed, suggestions, when offered, may appear somewhat palliative but may fail to be effective in the long run.

Thirdly, by stating that it is *desirable* to build up unity and concord—and who can deny the need—it is not proved that conflicts did not exist in the historical past. This mode of argument would very much look like putting the cart before the horse. Since conflicts are manifest today we are eager to examine the issue for our awareness and guidance. To say that it is desirable that there should be no conflicts is akin to dissolving the problem.

Fourthly, Dr. Radhakrishnan's statement in his address appears to suffer from a certain amount of self-contradiction. Asoka's edict on rock, viz., *Samavāya eva sādhuḥ* (concord alone is meritorious) and Akbar's efforts for the establishment of 'principles of the widest toleration of opinions' go to give a broad hint that the imposition in the ways of living in the past, in the ancient and comparatively recent period, was disturbed and its repercussions just as we are experiencing today—the kind of schism or dissension we do not expect in a well-integrated nation. More of it follows presently.

## II

the risk of sounding reiterative it may be laid down that an integrated India is a vision cherished by all its citizens; there is a strong desire in all quarters for social homogeneity taking shape out of the jarring communal and regional cacophony that the country seems to be affected with. In this respect the missionary zeal evinced in certain quarters is understandable, albeit we have to guard against any vaulting ambition. Acausal approach to a problem may not necessarily be devoid of a pragmatic outlook. On the contrary it is in the correct analysis of a social problem that we may find its solution.

It is freely admitted that India is inhabited by people of heterogeneous features, nevertheless they have evolved a homogeneous characteristic labelled Indian. The people speak a multitude of languages and dialects, ethnologically may be descendants of various races, adhere to numerous religious faiths many of which are clearly identified and recognized, socially are ranged from princes to paupers, from fabulous industrial magnates to the earners of fifty paise a day. Yet there is a central theme in this bizarre picture,

resembling a specimen of modern art, and the dominant total effect is given the name Indian. The central theme is the feeling of belongingness, I-belong-to-India, Indian nationality. It is believed that it is this robust feeling which was responsible for ushering freedom to the land that had not seen freedom of its total population for centuries. In other words, there is something more than what we observe in cultural defraction which supersedes all distinctions. What is the source of this feeling is however not made clear.

In subjects pertaining to the social sciences it is not always easy to extricate facts from beliefs mingled with expectations and we have to be wary of assessing and weighing the available facts, as exhibited through man's actions, before putting these together. Man's nature is not as unpredictable as it is commonly held; admittedly he exhibits greater flexibility in his reactions than any other living being but there a clear trend can be noticed. Unlike any other animal he shows an almost uncanny power to adapt himself under varying circumstances and when placed under different conditions he reacts in surprisingly divergent ways. These external variations sometimes leave noticeable marks on his external feature and very much contribute to his mental make-up. Consequently, the wider the region a group of people may inhabit the wider the divergence we may expect to find, of this we may witness the varieties of people inhabiting the large tracts of land spaces in the U.S.S.R., Africa or China, and India provides as many reasons for disparity in her people. We may take a quick glance at the background of the people under discussion.

India covers an area of about 12,61,000 square miles with a land frontier of 9,400 miles and a coastline of 3,500 miles. Thus it is the seventh largest country in the world with a population of 437 million placing it second on the world list. It is more than fourteen times larger than the United Kingdom which has four distinct nationalities and little more than one-sixth the size of the U.S.S.R. which contains some twenty-two recognized nationalities.

The average annual temperature ranges from 9°C (48°F) to 35°C (95°F) and the annual rainfall from 10,800 mm. (425 in.) in Assam to 290 mm. (11.5 in.) in Rajasthan. This wide range in the climatic conditions makes it favourable for the inhabitants

to draw out varied patterns in temperament and living conditions. Climatic conditions as stated before combined with the fertility of the soil contribute a good deal towards the diversity in the psychophysical differences noticeable in the different communities. In a region enjoying abundant rains where the soil may be rich and crops in profusion, where the temperature does not tend to reach the extremes, the inhabitants may believably grow lethargic and easy-going compared to the areas where the dwellers have to adjust themselves against the rigours of climatic conditions and where cultivating the land or procuring food may be a backbreaking job. However, man is not a slave to his geographical environment. In the early twenties it was asserted that 'the Russian is as morose and melancholy as the steppes of his country' but in the course of the last thirty years they have grown somewhat different.

Density of population in India is as much at variance. It ranges from 10 persons per square mile in the Andamans, and 50 in Kashmir, to 900 in Kerala, one of the most densely populated regions in the world. It is about 2,000 in the Laccadive and 3,000 in Delhi. The rate of increase in population has grown from 11% in 1921 to 21.5% in 1961.

In habits and social customs the disparity is still more remarkable. In certain tribal areas snakes and frogs are bracketed with rice in eating, whereas, the *swetambar* Jain priests are careful enough to see that no insect perchance enters the mouth and go about with their mouths covered with thick gauze. 'We have in India all forms of marital life, such as polyandry (a woman possessing more than one husband) of the matriarchal Nairs, the fraternal polyandry (all brothers married to one woman) of the *cis*-Himalayan tribes, the polygyny (possessing many wives) among the Mohammedans and backward castes of Hindus, and other diverse methods of securing wives'. Indians speak in fifteen languages, besides English, as specified in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. In addition there are forty-seven other Indian languages, and tribal languages, or dialects spoken by populations of over a lakh each. The total number of languages and dialects (1951 Census) is 845. About 84% of the population are adherents to the Hindu religion, about 10% are Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 1.8% Sikhs and the

rest are Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or people of other tribal and non-tribal religions.

It is sometimes suggested that the territorial compactness of the Indian sub-continent is one of the factors responsible for the sense of Indian unity. Apparently the contour of the Indian peninsula has geographically remained the same since geological periods, after all it could not be altered but there is little justification for accepting this statement. The contour of Europe has remained the same since the Upper Pleistocene age but this has not stood in the way of varied cultural groups growing into different nationalities or disappearing from the map. The islands of Great Britain certainly are compact and isolated, nonetheless these islands hold together people of different socio-cultural history. The map of India has often changed with the altering of the criss-cross boundaries of the domains contained in it. Around 600 B.C. to the west of the line drawn from Kutch to Kashmir stood the Persian provinces, the rest comprised India divided into about 15 republics in North India, the Deccan was divided into Maharashtra tribes in the west and Andhra and Kalinga Kingdoms in the centre and the east, whereas in the south there were three other kingdoms without any central power to link these regions. Around 300 B.C. the Mauryan Empire rolled from latitude  $15^{\circ}$  in the south and longitude  $90^{\circ}$  in the east over to the regions across Afghanistan and Baluchistan of today. The Gupta Empire in A.D. 500 constituted only a third of modern India, the rest being divided into tributary states, independent kingdoms and Saka and Kushan states. After the collapse of the Harsha Empire India stood divided into a dozen states at war with each other. During the period covered by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was one India indeed barring at the fringes on the extreme south and east. Thereafter once again the Indian map took a variegated pattern after the crumbling of the Muslim empire and by 1398 the country came to be divided into numerous territories. From 1526 onwards the map took a different colour, one-India rolled from Tanjore in the south to the Panjirs in the north and the region of Assam in the East to the boundaries of Persia in the west. In the sixteenth century the map turned into a chessboard with the remnants of the Moghul Empire, Maratha states, Afghan

empire and Settlements of the Portuguese, British, Dutch and French as also the independent states.

The above merely portrays a series of snapshots pointing towards certain potential sources of divergence and difference. However the bond that ties one man to another and which creates groups or destroys them, is much more dynamic. A map conveys little indeed, land severed from its people is little more than soil. Moreover the people who have now been brought closer together, owing to rapid expansion in population and improved means of transport, have a history of their own. It is this growing proximity of the people which holds the problems of integration but there is no reason to conclude that these issues are of very recent origin. If the narratives in the epics are to be relied upon India was sparsely populated in the days of *Ramayana*. The *doab* region gets the most mention in the epic, the Vindhya region and the adjacent areas are described as forests and the description of the *dakshinatyā* leaves only a vague impression. It would however be reasonable to hold that families lived under accepted social bonds, communities existed, social hierarchy and stratification were matters of reality, man was not then devoid of greed and lust, as also of righteousness and benevolence. Likewise are the narratives in the *Mahabharata* with the minor difference that here the orbit is much more widened and the characters portrayed are more human and akin to us. Barring these two classics we do not have any other which may help us in obtaining a comprehensive picture of the land. Let it be borne in mind that these epics were not composed with the intention of leaving behind historical documents, neither are these to be treated at par with travelogues. These mainly reflect devotion and cautiously we have to cull the requisite facts which as it may be expected are mixed up with a good deal of creative imagination.

There are a good many expressions to designate classification and division of a large population, viz., community, citizen, nationality, race, ethnical group, and so on. Out of these we may have to use often two terms, viz., community and nationality. The word community as used in social sciences signifies a broad group of people living together. Members of the *primary community* are those who maintain contact with each other in the course of day-to-day living as it is common in a village or a

*muhalla*, the term lays emphasis on the geographical proximity and contact rather than on psychological affinity and intimacy. *Secondary community* in its composition is larger than primary community and bears a broader texture, but is smaller than a nationality; the question however remains: how small is small! To designate a community or a group we have therefore to employ certain criteria in addition to the numerical strength of a community and these criteria should be tangible enough for our comprehension.

While using a set of criteria we shall have to satisfy ourselves whether it would be apposite to hold that the people of India belonged, or belong today, to one nationality or if they manifest characteristics of different nationalities. Or, may there be any occasion for introducing a third view? If it were found true that the people inhabiting today within the geographical boundary of India constituted one nationality and are descendants of one nationality and which nationality can be distinguished from the nationalities inhabiting the neighbouring regions, the complaint of alleged disintegration would then be justified, and we should then seek for the causative factors responsible for the disorganization and dissolution. On the other hand if it were proved that India is and was inhabited by peoples of diverse nationalities or secondary communities, or that the people constituted a mosaic of communities then the issue would be somewhat different. Then our problem would be to devise ways and means of bringing about integration anew which had never existed.

### III

Words symbolize our psychological experiences and ideas and not only aid in communicating with others but also help in clarifying our own understanding. However we are not always fortunate to have one word for one idea, that perhaps is one advantage that the Chinese languages enjoy. Confusion abounds when a word conveys a different meaning each to politicians, psychologists, sociologists, and others. The expression nationality is a case to the point. If this word could mean to signify only one sense then quite a few would lose the opportunity of obtaining a doctorate in sociology or politics.



Briefly speaking nationality bears two broad patterns of meaning one of which unmistakably carries legal force with it. In this context a nation is described as the maximum number of people owing allegiance to a State, and nationality is defined as 'the bond between an individual and a state by which the individual can claim protection of the state of which he is a subject and to which he owes allegiance'. As it may be seen it is purely a legal terminology having little in common with any other definition of nationality bearing socio-cultural significance. Looking at it from the political standpoint nationality is acquired by (a) birth or descent, (b) registration, (c) naturalization, (d) integration, subjugation and cession, and these postulates can be used only with reference to an existing state. It is actually here that confusion begins to grow when the two meanings of nationality are somehow interchanged. A person may be designated as Indian in the international sphere as in matters of obtaining passport or when he sues a person governed by the laws of another country. This person described as Indian may be of Dutch parentage and brought up in the U.K. He may be unacquainted for all practical purpose with the customs and manners prevalent in India, nevertheless he remains Indian due to his declared allegiance to the state. To use this nomenclature we have first to establish the existence of the state. To say that Indian nationality, in this sense, was in existence in the historical periods prior to the advent of the British it has to be proved that state, as we conceive it today and not merely a realm or domain, had then existed.

The other meaning of the word nationality, used in common parlance, bears an undelineated significance of socio-cultural amalgam. The process in defining it poses all the problems that faced ten blind men trying to define an elephant. Yet the terminology entangled in thorny shrubs of verbiage remains there and cannot be bulldozed to pave our path for the sake of uniformity. It would therefore be advisable to select a few samples of definitions and decide for ourselves how best we could make use of this word and in which sense may it be used. Incidentally, the recommendations made in the report of the National Integration Committee contains one important suggestion, viz., 'Promotion of national outlook in the fields of education and other spheres'. Apparently the learned members have left it to the

readers to decide for themselves how to accept the expression national, yet much depends on its clear enunciation.

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Mill (5) believed that 'a portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality, if they are united among themselves by common sympathies, which do not exist between them and any others—which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves, exclusively'. This feeling of belongingness according to Mill is generated through more than one medium like identity of race and descent, community of language and community of religion, geographical limits. 'But the strongest of all is identity of political antecedents, the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past', and he hastens to remind that 'none of these circumstances however are either indispensable, or necessarily sufficient by themselves'.

Mill has made it quite clear that among all the criteria used in demarcating nationalism, the psychosocial criteria, embracing the historical continuity, are of the greatest import. Possession of national history . . . community of recollections . . . pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret. . . .

As a historian, Toynbee has used a different criterion to deal with the problem of classifying events in socio-political evolution. His units of classification comprise the epochs of civilization rather than the smaller vexing groups of nationalities which he believes are by-products caused by the impact of democracy on modern parliamentarism. Nationality he has portrayed as a spirit which makes people feel, act and think about a part of any given society as though it were a whole of that society (6). In characterizing the various civilizations that he has dealt with Toynbee has laid emphasis on religion and its subsidiary effects on art, culture, etc. and these no doubt are useful criteria in appreciating the concept of nationality as a socio-cultural amalgam.

Students of sociology would naturally evince keen interest in the subject in view and Hertz is a notable contributor in this

field. Hertz believes that the social concept of nation comprises four main psychosocial aspirations appearing in numerous forms and combinations and are closely connected with objective factors such as national territory, language and history, though he has not made it clear whether history can be assessed against objective scales as are used in biology or physics. In describing the forms in which national aspirations may be expressed Hertz has enumerated the following: '(1) The striving for national unity comprising political, economic, social, religious, and cultural unity, community and solidarity. (2) The striving for national freedom, which comprises independence from foreign domination or interference, and internal freedom from forces regarded as un-national or derogatory to the nation. (3) The striving for separateness, distinctiveness, individuality, originality, or peculiarity. The most significant example is the value attributed to a separate national language. (4) The striving for distinction among nations, for honour, dignity, prestige and influence, which easily becomes a striving for domination. The striving for distinction is, probably, the strongest of all four aspirations, and seems to underlie them all' (7).

To quote another student of sociology, Bernard Joseph has defined 'Nationalism as a quality is the subjective corporate sentiment permanently present in and giving a sense of distinctive unity to the majority of the members of a particular civilized section of humanity, which at the same time objectively constitutes a distinct group by virtue of possessing certain collective attributes peculiar to it such as homeland, language, religion, history, culture or traditions. Nationality as a concrete designation denotes a group possessed of the quality of nationality as so defined' (8). This author has subsequently made it clear that using the above definition, nationality as such cannot be determined in an individual 'but by his appertaining to a group which as a whole does feel the sentiment or acts accordingly'. In other words the concept of nationality entails co-operative evaluation in the background of still larger or smaller cohesive groups.

Perhaps the most notable document on this subject is provided by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The Report presented by the member-authors gives a reasonable and sober warning that the word nation has meant different things to

different people at different times and in different languages. In their views, to delineate the characteristic features of any modern concept of nationality the following may be held as the functional criteria, viz., common government maintaining law and order over a minimally requisite size of the land and its population, a few scores of families constituting a tribe would not be called a nation nor a country torn in civil strife. Again, the members must be distinguished from all other groups with reference to such psychosocial matters which may enable them to realize that they have material interest in common. Additionally, these members of the nationality should possess a common language, ancestry and interests. 'The ideal nation, as commonly pictured, would seem to be a community which (a) possesses characteristics distinguishing it clearly from others, (b) is free from external control, and sufficiently strong to maintain that freedom. One of the chief objects, for which freedom is a prerequisite, is the unrestrained enjoyment of the characteristics mentioned in (a) above, since this is felt to be necessary for in nation's happiness and well-being: (c) acts as a single entity possessing interests and pursuing policies designed to promote those interests' (9). Finally we may look into the version of another school of political thought which prefers to stand alone. Describing the Marxist standpoint Stalin has laid down a definition of his school, viz., 'A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture' adding that 'none of the above characteristics is by itself sufficient to define a nation. On the other hand, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be absent and the nation ceases to be a nation' (10). With his dogmatic emphasis he has added that 'It is only when *all* these characteristics are present that we have a nation'.

No attempt will be made here to seek for the views of anthropologists or psychologists since the subject-matter under consideration does not fall under their purview.

Being aware of the fluid nature of the term nation we have preferred to listen to the different views and as it may be seen there is no unanimity in the various opinions; we may therefore try to locate the largest denominator in these definitions. These are: ~~common~~<sup>public</sup> territory and government, language, history, recol-

lections prevalent in the group and also the psychologically cohesive material in the nature of national perspective and personality. \*Some of the accepted criteria, comparatively speaking, are tangible and concrete enough to be visually reflected like territory-cum-government, or even language and history; these are sources germinating the sense of nationality which exist *per se* and we do not have to take recourse to interpretation. On the other hand some of the criteria like psychosocial distinctiveness and cultural patterns are not readily amenable to analysis and leave a certain latitude for redefining these. In this matter we enjoy today a much better position than our predecessors could have expected, since we are considerably benefited by the researches in social anthropology and social psychology.

### Chapter 3

## NATION AND NATIONALITY

IN THE PRECEDING chapter it was suggested that the term nation bore two different connotations. People belonging to a nationality may be identified purely on politico-legal grounds or they may be identified against socio-cultural criteria. These two connotations therefore are independent of each other and should be dealt with accordingly.

Judged from politico-legal standpoint nationality is defined as 'the bond between an individual and a state by which the individual can claim protection of the state of which he is a subject and to which he owes allegiance'.<sup>1</sup> Legal definitions though are self-contained have earned the notoriety of being ambiguous to the laymen. There are three words in this definition which need clarification, viz., state, claim, and allegiance; of these the first term is of importance.

State in international law is described as 'a people permanently occupying a fixed territory, bound together into one body politic by common subjection to some definite authority exercising, through the medium of an organized government, a control over all persons and things within its territory, capable of maintaining relation of peace and war . . .'.<sup>2</sup> State signifies 'a people permanently occupying a fixed territory . . .',<sup>3</sup> 'a collection of persons occupying a certain territory and having legislative and executive organisation free from the control of any other human power'.<sup>1</sup> It may be noticed that the word people frequently occurs in these definitions, and this means that no concept of

<sup>1</sup> Jowitt's *Dictionary of English Law*.

<sup>2</sup> Osborn's *Concise Law Dictionary*.

<sup>3</sup> Black's *Law Dictionary*.

state can be complete without its people. A state is not merely a ruling monarch's landed property inhabited by his subjects, or a king's realm. The modern concept of state cannot be viewed independently of the word people by which is meant 'the commonality or common folk as distinguished from the higher classes'.

During the British period Indians had no separate identity of a nation but were endowed with British nationality, in matters of international relationship as in granting passport, but without citizenship. This meant that in matters of international affairs the Indians were entitled to be treated as British subjects, but could not claim for rights granted to the British citizens. For instance, an Indian could not demand the rights granted to the British people by the Magna Carta nor those under the Great Charter of Liberties which provides that 'no freeman shall be taken or imprisoned or deprived of his land or liberties except by law of the land'. The word people as used here, with reference to the state, was not valid in the British regime since not all had the right to franchise. Thus the word state was not applicable to the Indians during the British period as it is today; Indians then owed allegiance not to the state but to the imperial crown, the crown no doubt represented the state but this state had not come into being by the consent of the people. Also, while owing allegiance to the crown the people could not claim rights at par with the British citizens. It may therefore be reasonably concluded that the Indian people did not constitute a nationality when judged against the politico-legal concept of the term. Let us now look into the conditions prior to the establishment of the British rule in India since it is often claimed that the concept of nationality was applicable to India even earlier than this period.

During the Moghul period we gather the land belonged to the reigning monarch and the property of the subject was not demarcated from the property of the ruler; all property in the land belonged to the king, if not *de jure* it was so *de facto*. The French traveller Bernier who visited India (1658-1668) has left an impressive account of what he had seen and which leaves no doubt about his keen sense of observation. In answer to the question as to why the Muslim period failed to produce nobility as it did in France or Italy during monarchy there, Bernier wrote: 'the land throughout the whole empire is considered the

property of sovereign, there can be no earldom, marquises or dutchies'. With the death of a person, including a nobility, the property came to be vested with the ruling monarch who 'may or may not give' part of the estate by way of retrieve to the descendants. Speaking of the dignitaries he states, 'It must not be imagined that the Omrahs or Lords of the Mongol's court are members of ancient families, as our nobilities in France. The king being proprietor of all the lands in the empire, there can exist neither Dukedoms nor Marquisate. . . . The courtiers are often not even descendants of Omrahs, because, king being heir of all their possessions, no family can long maintain its distinction, but often the Omrah's death is soon extinguished, and the sons, or at least the grandsons reduced generally, we might almost say, to beggary, and compelled to enlist as mere troopers in the cavalry. . . . The king however usually bestows a small pension on the widow . . . when deprived of this pension they sink at once into utter insignificance' (11. 211). That is, each generation had to begin from the beginning and hereditary claims to property or social status were ruled out. Thomas Roe, who was ambassador to the court of Jehangir wrote in his letters home, 'They have no written law. The king by his owne word ruleth, and his Gouvernours of Provinces by that authoritie. . . . The Great men about him are not borne Noble, but Fauourites raised'. Dignity of these noblemen was adjudged in equivalence to the number of horses given them by the king to tend and also 'so much land is bound to maintaine so many Horses as rent. . . . But as they (the noblemen) die . . . it returneth to the king like Rivers to the sea, both of those he gave to' (12. 110). If this was the fate of the then peers of the realm we are left to conjecture over the lot of the common man. Factually there lived no common man under the Moghul rule, they merely existed and this existence was accepted as a necessary adjunct for maintaining an enormous zamindari. A Rip van Winkle in Akbar's or Aurangzeb's days if awoke today would rub his eyes in startle to find that the head of the state (a word which would be beyond his comprehension) could be sued or that the Government (existing apart from the head of the state) was answerable to the people for the promulgation of laws.

The society at large was delineated with various forms of stratification determined by caste and religion, wealth and poverty,



pretentious living and supine existence. The difference between the rich and the poor was accepted as such and the difference in the treatment meted to each stratified segment of population was rigorously maintained. Statistical implications in appreciating the term—the people—was unknown. The bottom rung of the social ladder, which all through in history has contained the largest denomination, was meant to serve those who stood in the higher rungs and it was not for it to question why. A kind man may have shown mercy, a good-natured master might have done justice to his serf, a king or a nobleman may have been charitably disposed towards the man at the bottom rung but these were singular exceptions and could not be used to indicate that the majority of the subjects had any demarcated rights to claim. Estate, as a vast landed property plus its inhabitants, did not come to be distinguished from the state constituting a class forming part of the body politic and sharing in government. Therefore the modern definition of nation could not be applied to the conditions prevailing in the Moghul period.

Shape of things were more rueful in the days of Turkish rule. As one ardent student of Muslim history has observed, 'The Sultan of Delhi was in theory an unlimited despot, bound by no law, subject to no ministerial check, and guided by no will except his own. The people had no rights, only obligations; they lived to carry out his commands' (13. 5). It is quite possible that all did not equally conform to the same level of despotism, among the liege lords some may have been tyrants and some more amenable to reason, some bad despots may have acted benevolently at times, but despots they were by all modern standards.

Arrogant autocracy did not limit its exerting authority to the fields of land and property but also in the religious sphere which made even a liberal foreign historian to remark that 'Mussalmans are enjoined to offer to idolatry the choice between conversion and the sword . . . Christians, Jews and perhaps Zoroastrians might, it is true, be spared, provided that they submitted to their conquerors and paid the *jizya* or poll-tax, but no such concessions were shown to the idol-worshipping Hindus. For them, Mahmud and his followers felt bitter hatred which may be compared to that of the Puritans under Cromwell for the Irish' (14. 223).

Judging the precepts recorded in the sacred books of the Hindus it appears that the concepts of democracy and state were not far from what we understand it today. According to the Mimamsa whose verdict in Hindu Law carries weight the king was supposed to be mere servant receiving his wages and taxes. In the ancient days the monarch was supposed not to possess property nor his subordinate princes. Recapitulating the position of the Hindu king a learned scholar has observed that the king 'had no jurisdiction over individual subjects. He was called master, but it was settled law which people knew like the daily appearance of the sun that he was master of no subject except a criminal' (15. 184). It may be agreed that the king in the Hindu period did not function like a despot that we find in the Muslim reign. But any effort made to compare him with a modern president would be a forced comparison. Kautilya viewed that 'In the happiness of his (king's) subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good' (16. 38). Kautilya's *Arthashastra* claims to date between 321 and 296 B.C., and it is an admirable document as we find in it such democratic principles having existed in the ancient past. However we may pause here to look into certain other issues pertinent to our inquiry and this may necessitate a little digression.

Stratification and hierarchy in social organization has been a normal feature since man came into being, or even earlier. Animals are no less subjected to this social force, as a matter of fact they express it in a perspicuous manner. Leave a few animals of the same species together and each would quickly decide his social order within the group. Man in the course of evolution could not eliminate this eternal force of habit. When he roamed free from the cultural encumbrances he decided about his social position adopting a technique not dissimilar to the animals though it is vainly referred to as the law of the jungle since it has not disappeared from the areas cleared of jungles. However, external force remained the main weapon which was used to decide who would command whom or be feared and respected. This external force originally was the force of the brawn which in course of time turned into the force of the brain. However we need not take a dreary view of this biological endowment, since it is this external force which has also

given rise to the internal inhibitions we call conscience, a prerequisite to the growth of civilization.

Intellect—a synonym for natural gift of intelligence, power to sustain in the face of danger, possession of arms or wealth, religion-cum-superstition, culture, education, and many other means have been employed in the past and continue to be used today; these are decisive factors in the formation of social stratification. It is perforce difficult to imagine that ranking order in a social group, any social group as a matter of fact, can altogether be effaced, though the pattern may change. It is a kind of natural social law which inevitably will prevail whenever an issue arises to decide upon the relative merits of man and man in one sphere or another.

It all started during man's primitive state in matters of procuring food, mate, shelter and such mundane needs. If by virtue of circumstances a group gained ascendancy over another group it naturally wanted to retain its hold for obvious benefits. Now, an individual or a community may be subdued owing to the situation being pregnant with naked fear as it may happen in a fight, a battle or a war, or any fear of impending danger. The ability to gain hold with the use of fear produces results which in the long run may prove economical, it is almost like investment, since once the fear is ingrained it can be diverted into various other channels. The sources of original fear in the primitive man, like storms and eclipses or earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, came to be coalesced and crystallized into the beliefs of ominous spirits, and this kind of belief is still prevalent in many tribal people. Also, there were men who tried to convince others of their power to maintain closer contact with the evil spirits. From the belief in ominous spirits-cum-powerful-nature and the magic man, it is one jump to the belief in the omnipotent god and his priests. It is accepted by the social scientists that out of these original beliefs and fears, later mingled with devotion and thinking, there gradually emerged potent forces of religion and thus grew religious beliefs and ideas which raised man from the status of super-beasts. Thus we find in Rigveda (as also in the Zend) prevalence of worship of *surya* and *agni*, *chandra* and *vayu*. Social codes and mores gradually have evolved along with our religious beliefs

and social living and these have brought about an order out of chaos in social action and thinking.

In raising the edifice of social structure, religion, particularly at the initial stage, has always contributed its share at one stage or another. The Aryan religion, which subsequently changed in its form in many respects and later came to be labelled as the Brahminical or Hindu religion, had proved no exception. The distinction between the Hindu religion and most of other religious faiths is noticed in some of the peculiarities existing in its hierarchical structure. For instance, in Hinduism there never has been a super-Brahman, comparable to the Pope, nor anyone to be compared with Mohammed who insisted on his being accepted as the prophet of God. Instead, among the early Aryans we find the concept of caste established in the society and in this hierarchy Brahmans as a class became religious heads, something like god's agents. What is pertinent to our present inquiry is to examine the nature of relationship that existed between the king, the Brahmans and the rest of the society. Unfortunately the vedic period poses the greatest obstacles in this inquiry.

The vedic literature is constituted mainly of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyaks and Upanishads but these fail to throw sufficient light on matters social. For instance, we learn therefrom the different forms of gods then worshipped, various types of magic that were practised, of sacrifices and domestic rituals performed, we learn about the nature of the dead, priests and caste structure, suggested norms of living, about the theosophy of the Brahmanas and philosophy of the Upanishads, and so on. The Rigveda makes it clear that out of a primeval giant Brahma there grew the four castes, viz., the Brahman from its mouth, Kshatriya from its arms, Vaishya from the thighs and Sudras from the feet. 'The Brahman is required to be of Brahminical descent, to follow an appropriate course of life, to possess renown for learning, and to be engaged in the spiritual advancement of the people. In return he is entitled to receive honour and presents, and to be exempt from oppression and death penalty. The Kshatriyas are to protect the people, and show consideration for Brahmans, while the commonality in its subjection to these two castes is not very much better off than the Cūdras. . . . The inviolability of the king is asserted, and his duty to assert and defend the law, Dharma' (17.481).

It may be conceded that vedic literature, except in its meta-physical aspects, mainly is directive literature indicating the norms in social living. In the absence of supporting evidence in the form of auxiliary literature unsurmountable barriers are left in our visualizing the shape of the society as it actually existed. It fails to offer any dynamic picture of the society.

We have abundant materials to give us an idea as to how the people lived in the Muslim period just as we may learn of the living conditions of the people in the days of Sophocles in Greece or Pharaohs in Egypt but there is hardly any supporting evidence to throw light on the life of the man in India in the vedic literature. This point may be dilated a little. Let us imagine that a thousand years hence research scholars, emerging from the dark age of the twenty-first century A.D., are engaged in collecting materials of the past. Let us also presume that all the written records of the twentieth century regarding this earth, barring a few texts like the Vedas and Brahmanas, New Testament and Quran, would disappear due to destruction by sudden perilous heat. Would not these investigators then be entitled to draw conclusions from these texts, that the inhabitants in the twentieth century lived in peace and harmony, preached the gospel of equality and fraternity and all the tribes vied with each other in maintaining peace and concord?

Vedas and Brahmanas are often quoted to prove the prevalence of certain norms in the life of the man in ancient times. As such these texts shine like diamonds in the dark. It is amazing to think that long before most of the recorded laws came into existence, books of wisdom like the Bible or the Quran, the sacred texts of the Hindus had formulated principles of living and thereby had extensively contributed towards social upliftment. It remains, however, to be proved that the norms laid down were actually adhered to. Existence of a law does not necessarily guarantee its conformation in practice. Looking from this point of view we find vedic literature of little value for our purpose in gaining acquaintance with the course of life that man then may have followed.

Manu's Institutes (18), it is estimated, came into existence in the 9th century B.C. This source is of value to us because of the formulation of the human relationship that was prevalent during that period; for instance, it gives detailed accounts of the

intercaste relationship then in existence. In the section laying down the precepts for guiding human relationship on the basis of castes meticulous care has been taken to foresee all eventualities. Some of these may be quoted for illustrations.

‘ But a man of the servile class whether bought or unbought, he (Brahman) may compel to perform servile duty, because such a man was created by the Self-existent for the purpose of serving Brahmins ’ (. 230).

‘ A Sudra, though emancipated by the master, is not released from a state of servitude; for of a state, which is natural to him, by whom can he be divested? ’ (. 230).

‘ Three persons, a wife, a son, and a slave, are declared by law to have *in general* no wealth exclusively their own; the wealth, which they may earn, *is regularly* acquired for the man, to whom they belong ’ (. 230).

‘ A learned Brahman having found a treasure formerly hidden, may take it, without any deduction; since he is the lord of all ’ (. 183).

‘ A Brahman may seize without hesitation, *if he be distressed for a subsistence*, the goods of his Sudra slave, for as that slave can have no property, his master may take his goods ’ (. 230).

These are a few samples, and many more could be added, which give a fair indication of the rigidity of rules that divided one section of the people from another. It may be noticed that discrimination among sections of population was not limited to the sphere of caste alone; man's domination over the woman is also made quite explicit. Women's position in the society was made clear by the ruling that ‘ In childhood must a female be dependent on her father; in youth, on her husband; her lord being dead, on her sons; if she have no sons, on the near kinsmen of her husband; if he left no kinsmen, on those of her father; if she have no paternal kinsmen, on the sovereign: a woman must never seek independence ’ (. 134).

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is divided into fifteen sections. It lays down in details the duties of the kings and messengers, suggests how forts should be built and roads constructed, states the func-

tions of the various superintendents and lays down statutes regarding sexual relationship. The section of 'division of the land' opens with the instructions regarding pasture land that is to be given to the Brahman but nothing is mentioned of any other caste. Further, it is clearly stated that 'The king shall bestow on cultivators only such favour and remission as will tend to swell the treasury'. Fines were imposed not on the basis of crimes alone but distinction was maintained on the basis of castes also. We may leave it to the psychometrists if they may possibly assess the mathematical position of castes judged by the rules laid down in matters of imposing fines. An example: transaction in human lives was permitted in some cases. For illegal transactions it is stated, 'The selling or mortgaging by kinsmen of the life of a Sudra who is not a born slave, and has not attained majority, but is an Arya in birth shall be punished with a fine of 12 panas; of a Vaisya, 24 panas; of a Kshatriya, 36 panas; and of a Brahmana, 48 panas. If persons other than kinsmen do the same they shall be liable to the three amerciaments and capital punishment respectively; purchasers and abettors shall likewise be punished. It is no crime for Mlechas to sell or mortgage the life of their own offspring. But never shall an Arya be subject to slavery' \* (. 205).

While Manu lays emphasis on the laws pertaining to the social life and Kautilya's emphasis is on the statecraft, Yajñawalkya, whose *Samhitā* appeared much later on the scene, deal mainly with the affairs of legislature and judiciary, laws of *dharma* to be followed by all the castes and the kings (19). Here too the discriminations based on caste and social position are quite evident. 'If the king comes by any (hidden) treasure, he must give half of it to a Brahman. But then, again, (when) a learned Brahman (happens to find out any) the whole (treasure) should go to him, for he is the lord of all' (. 68). Again, 'Remaining

\* It is not possible here to enter into the polemics of the origin of caste system in India. It is quite probable, as some scholars have suggested, that originally the system was based on deeds rather than on birth. But this system could not have been maintained for long. It stands to reason that the man of a higher caste enjoying extensive social privileges could not have relinquished them and willingly accepted a lower caste by exchanging his paying occupation; neither would he have liked his social adversaries to grow numerous and thereby threaten his position. Caste by birth was the only alternative course to evolve.

hungry for three days (Brahman) may steal rice from a caste other than a Brahmana' (. 124). Women were ranked with old men, boys, drunkards and heretics and could not be produced at the courts of law for giving evidence as witness.

The trend of mental attunement that is revealed in these books of laws undeniably shows a pattern of human relationship based on a radically different social foundation from what we are accustomed to. Comparison of the present and the past against ethical standards and norms would not be judicious; what may be felt as repugnant today might have had its own necessity in the past. The fact is that it would be unrealistic to push the present in the distant past and try to forge a link which did not have any existence. The impression that one gains after browsing on the literature available is that the principle of difference or discrimination was presumed and accepted; subsequently it was followed by a process of adjustment on these bases. This adjustive process cannot be compared with the kind of harmony in our society that we have in view and which has its foundations on the principle of compromise of rights. The statement to the effect that in the happiness of his subjects lies the happiness of the monarch, in their welfare his welfare, is nullified when we come to learn that the vast multitude of the people were under the mercy of the ruler and the Brahmins; they had obligations to the monarchs and their priests, but could not call for protection by virtue of the rigorous traditions then existing. What we would consider as protection was denied to them by the laws and social codes framed by the Brahmins. Again, it may prove hazardous to dig out the past and parade it as an ideal norm to be used by the present and future generations. While accepting the validity of the perpetuity of social hierarchy and stratification, its mode of existence is to be finally decided upon by the society of a particular age. Distinction among communities based on accidental birth may have served its purpose, if any, in the remote past, but it should be understood that perpetuation of this distinction is now challenged in unequivocal terms.

The State as a political instrument had no existence in the Vedic or post-Vedic eras. Subjects did not owe allegiance to the State but to the monarch; the rights of the subject could not be established since he lived at the king's dictates and under the



divine rights of the Brahmans. By rights, of course, we mean here those social benefits which have emanated and overflowed from the civilized man's sense of justice and equity, the absence of which he may have only dimly felt in the ancient past. Realization of this gap in human relationship was a long-drawn historical process which grew in intensity with the passage of time and with closer contact among various human communities. The essential freedoms such as the right to form one's own opinion and express it, to demand justice, to be treated in the court of law at par with the other members of the society, to choose one's avocation in life, claims or guarantees of private ownership did not grow at one place or at one time but constitute a cumulative mental function of mankind. No matter which part of world it happened to be, each time a community fought against those it conceived as intruders against its existence and prosperity, this sense of rights added a fresh brick to its foundation.

It may be concluded here that the political nationality of the inhabitants of India was recently established with the attainment of freedom. In course of time this new State that had now come into existence defined its own constitution to guide its government. This constitution severed the major links with the British parliament, and was drawn up according to the directives received from the representatives of the people in the true sense of the term. The constitution became valid within a well-demarcated geographical region. In this way an Indian national can now be precisely located with reference to other peoples inhabiting other regions of the world even though some among the latter might bear a close resemblance to the Indian in the cultural composition.

In the above, the word nationality was used as adjective of nation in the political sense but then, as mentioned earlier, this also bears equivocal implications. We should therefore re-examine the problem in the light of the other meaning of the term 'nationality'. In this chapter and in the next we shall explore the feasibility of considering the Indian people as belonging to a uniform nationality against the criteria of religion, language and culture.

Religion as a criterion of nationality is recognized by the least number of authors we have consulted before. Toynbee looks upon religion not as a philosophy or dogma but as a source-book of cults and rituals in every-day life. Barring one author none else is inclined to accept religion as an important constituent factor in nationality, and this is understandable. There is hardly any nationality in the world which can claim to contain people belonging to one religion. The population of Jews in the U.S.A. is 1 : 21 against the Christians and the protestant religion there is a broad label to hold within its fold some 32 recognized bodies; besides, there is a considerable number of American Indians professing their own religion. In the U.S.S.R. people do subscribe to different religious faiths though this is not pointed out in statistical tables. The Hindus in India form about 80 per cent of the total population; in other words the nationality of the people cannot be judged against the single criterion of religion unless of course the minorities were mentally brushed aside which fortunately we cannot do. On the other hand we find that the Euro-American countries are predominantly of Christian faith yet these are inhabited by people of diverse nationalities. Pakistan commenced its life as a separate state using religion as a nexus of nationality. How far this criterion has succeeded in forging a solid link between the people of the two wings of Pakistan or between the Shias and Sunnis it is for them to ponder over. Judging the facts in the two categories religion cannot be held as an essential ingredient in constituting a nationality; there may be different nationalities with a common religion just as different religious groups can co-exist under the same nationality.

It is, however, frequently voiced from responsible quarters that in this country religion in the ancient and medieval past has played an important role in bringing about social cohesion and homogeneity and thereby has helped to foster a sense of social proximity akin to nationality. The natural corollary that would follow is that with the revival of imparting religious training a centrifugal force could be expected to be regenerated. This, as it is believed, might tighten the bolts of the ribs sup-

porting the threatened structure of Indianhood. This idea if put into practice would lead to nothing short of a disaster. If we are not prepared to take lessons from our recent past then of course it would have to be admitted that history can teach nothing.

Apart from other reasons, it may be borne in mind that Islam and Christianity are essentially proselytizing religions. If freedom were given to them in the revival of conversion, the Hindus could not be expected to look upon as unperturbed spectators, chain reactions would inevitably be let loose. Lest this should be dismissed as a mere apprehension it may be added by way of an illustration that the Director of a well-known Christian Institute had unambiguously opined on an important occasion that 'Islam and Christianity, rightly or wrongly, hold to the belief that their religion alone is true. It is not for the State to enter into the controversy and seek to effect a compromise by suggesting that they agree to the dogma that all religions are true' (I. 36). He adds in a vein of complaint that 'To propagate is their (Muslims' and Christians') mission', and that mission is the core of their creed. We need not pause here to dilate upon this issue. It may merely be pointed out that man's religion is no longer a matter of his personal faith; he lives in a community of his own and each member has a vote to cast.

It may be worth our while to look at the picture of the growth and development of religion as practised, to be distinguished from the philosophical speculations, *vis-a-vis* the social structure. What we intend to examine here is the claims of the Hindu religion as it may have provided with an apparatus for social accord and unison. If the claims are held valid it should next be scrutinized as to what means were adopted to bring about the cohesion as it is claimed. As it is well known religion may forge a link among the people either by common consent which is an internal force of assent or it may exert an external force. Whatever the findings may be it has to be admitted that these two types of forces cannot be equated.

Religion no doubt has played crucial role in taming the biological man and raising him to the status of social asset. Looking from this angle it appears rather strange that on very few occasions religion was accepted by the masses of people in the atmosphere of quiet assent and acceptance. It was after launch-

ing half a dozen crusades, though, these were politically biased that the major segments of Europe were freed from what was considered as infidel influence and thereafter Europe came under Christian dominance. Islam did not sheath its sword in Asia; in Africa the spread of Muslim religion is attributed to the slave business operated by the Arabs. Among the Hindus in India, Brahminical dominance has pervaded and is retained through caste system that held the masses under their sway.

It is alleged that religious dichotomy in India was sharpened only with the advent of Islam though the validity of the assertion remains to be verified. It would perhaps be more appropriate to hold that with the advent of the Islamic faith on the Indian soil there was ushered one more religion to be reckoned with. It would not however be correct to construe that the pre-Islam Brahminical religion had erected a monolithic structure of one big happy family.

Describing the impact of Islam on Hindu religion during the period covered by the Sultanate a learned author has observed: 'So far as doctrinal changes are concerned, we could hardly expect any during the period . . . when Muslims were still a merely militant force and had hardly come into close or peaceful contact with the Hindus. To the latter, the Muslims were not only foreign and *mlchcha* . . . conquerors, but they had deeply wounded their religious susceptibilities by indiscriminate demolition of temples and destruction of images of Gods on a large scale. The Hindus would therefore be hardly in a mood to take any lesson from the teachings of Islam and the time was too short to produce even any indirect and unconscious effect' (20). On this there cannot be two opinions. The Turkish Sultanate, once it had attained supremacy, used proselytization on a large scale adopting means akin to barbarism. Elsewhere in the same book it is noted that 'the Hindus were denied the right to public worship and were subjected to civil disabilities and other indignities; and many communities, particularly in the lower strata of society, took up the new faith in order to escape these hardships' (21).

This statement could be pretty disturbing if it were judged at its face value, but on scrutiny it may be found to contain more than one meaning. What is quite evident is that the Muslims were out on a grand experiment of unifying all on their

own terms. But there is another part of the statement which should not be overlooked. By the way, on several occasions, when in his professional capacity this writer was approached by harassed parents to consult on their street-minded ward the conversation usually followed on these lines:

‘My son doesn’t like to stay at home, never, he has made the streets his home. What would you suggest?’

‘Tell me, how did you manage to make him dislike his home so much?’ And, it often worked.

In the same vein it may be inquired as to why ‘particularly the lower strata of the society’ preferred conversion. May it be interpreted that in the coercion of the foreign religion the converts found a sort of better devil than the devil that had scared this stratum prior to escaping hardships? Again, were the persons once converted to Islam allowed to regain entrance in the Hindu fold if they had so desired? It is wondered if the deep-rooted attitude of disdain towards the lower castes had not made a sizable repercussion among the Hindus; the Brahmans may have felt aggrieved of being robbed of their slave-property, but then the facts need be sieved out, and faced. The author just quoted has further added that the conquered Hindus ‘made compromises with rulers when compelled to do so; they served them when they could not help doing so. But they would not let them defile the sanctity of their homes or castes, social and religious observances. . . .’ Now, it may be easily imagined that Brahmans objected to defiling the sanctity of castes, but it would be pertinent to inquire whether the Sudras concurred in retaining this system and, if so, whether we have any testimony to buttress this statement. Actually the evidence available to us gives a distinct hint to the fact that the converted slaves were better treated by the Muslims than the non-convert Sudras by the people of their own religion.

As to the common belief that Hinduism was a sort of foundation on which the edifice of unity was built needs critical evaluation—a task which should be undertaken by more competent persons. For the present it may be pointed out that the data are insufficient to deny that the domination of the Brahmans was accepted by the other castes more as *fait accompli* than

as an *entrée*. In order to interpret the social history of a community it is not safe to rely on the religious texts alone. It is for this reason that evidence of others becomes necessary; such auxiliary evidence is provided by inscriptions on public monuments and the recorded views of the travellers of the period. Even then it would be advisable to adopt a somewhat detached attitude in reading in-between the lines. Asoka's pillars, for instance, speak well of his concern for concord and, in a way, these inscriptions may be interpreted to show that there prevailed harmony among the people. But then what sort of peoples these inscriptions may have referred to—any particular caste or castes, or all the people? To accept the latter it would be necessary to project our present to the past, and this we have found to be untenable. We find that the modern concept of "people" was not applicable in Asoka's days. But there is yet another query that could be raised about Asoka's inscriptions: What may have been the social conditions prevailing then which had impelled Asoka as a ruling monarch to go out of his way to erect such monuments? May it be that it was to introduce peace *amidst discord* that he had felt its necessity? Aptness of this inquiry may be judged from a hypothetical case. If some of the "BE-PREPARED" posters exhibited in the Indian streets in large towns in 1963 were preserved for the posterity, how a historian a thousand years hence might interpret these posters? Would he not be justified in his guesses that in 1963 India was not quite prepared to defend itself from some unexpected foreign invasion? Evidence provided by historical documents or inscriptions may be taken at their face value and relied upon without questioning at the cost of many other facts that might emerge if the same were examined with questioning eyes.

As it is well known, visitors frequently came to India during the days when Buddha's gospels were preached. Megasthenes was perhaps one of the oldest visitors to this land since he came in the third century B.C. If reliance could be placed on the extant fragments of the documents \* we have then to accept his

\* There are quite a few childish narratives in his diary. For instance: 'Near a mountain which is called Nulo there live men whose feet are turned backwards and have eight toes on each foot . . . in India there are tribes of men with dog-shaped heads armed with claws, clothed with skins, who speak not in the accents of human language, but only bark' (22. 82).

version that 'The whole population of India is divided into seven castes, of which the *first* is formed by the collective body of the Philosophers which in point of number is inferior to the other classes, but in point of dignity pre-eminent over all. . . . In requital of such (religious services) they receive valuable gifts and privileges' (22. 38). In a similar vein are deposited the observations of Huen-Tsiang, Fa-Hien, Al-Beruni and others and some of these will be presented at appropriate places.

To assert that religious toleration was the key-note during the Hindu period may prove justifiable on other grounds but socio-historical. The word toleration is applicable only to such a situation which takes into account the possibility of retribution, and not in a social condition which features domination and coercion. It is admitted that Brahmans, unlike the Muslims, did not use sword to kill those who refused to be converted but under the Brahmanical supremacy the soul of the common man was killed all the same. We should do well to remember that religious beliefs embody a strong core of mental imagery which is an integral part of man. Among all the expressional modes of a civilized human being religious conduct and deportment are the last that the man would like to relinquish or forsake. One does not change religion just as one would change one's clothing because it is not in keeping with a new model available in the market. Should it be held that Brahminical Hinduism wielded a strong force to unite the people, and if it is asserted that all the classes had willingly accepted to follow the precepts laid down in the *srutis* and *smritis* (let this be presumed), then it would be difficult to explain the rise of other religious forces like Jainism and later Buddhism.

Genesis of a new sect or religion on the soil, to be viewed differently from the advent of foreign religions like Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism, strongly suggests of existing dissension in the Hindu fold and reluctance on the part of a considerable section of the population in accepting the existing order, though this reluctance may not have been voiced eloquently. The acceptance of a new religion by a significant proportion of the population gives an indication to the fact that there was growing defection inside the body politic, suggesting that there was something inherently wrong with the social structure. To answer the question—what were the occasions which made Jainism and

Buddhism to evoke a wide response—it would call for a detailed analysis which is not possible here. However, there is nothing to indicate that these religious bodies had appealed only to the lower strata of the society; a considerable proportion of Vaishyas and Kshatriyas were also drawn towards it. A more precise analysis should be conducted in order to determine the role of Hinduism as an alleged unifying social force.

There is yet another facet of this issue which is very often treated scantily thus giving rise to a tendency to dissolve the problem rather than to face and solve it. Jainism and Buddhism have often been regarded as an over-flow of Hinduism, and explanations are offered in a complacent mood to the effect that there is no sharp line of demarcation between these three religious orders. Looking from the standpoint of metaphysical intricacies this may perhaps be true, but the main question remains unanswered. To say that these were quasi-Hindu religions is to side-track the issue. This kind of defensive orientation might be interpreted as parrying the question or minimising the seriousness of the inquiry, and the question will continue to remain unanswered. A new idea, in religion, politics, or in any other field of human knowledge or experience arises only when the preceding idea fails to meet the spiritual demands and satisfy the psychological needs. Crystallization and consolidation of a new doctrine or faith and its acceptance by a considerable number of people indicates the generation of polarities in the existing form of idea. The rise of Buddhism was not merely a quiet introduction of a fresh idea into the existing social system. It arose as 'a revolt against the sacrificial system and denied the authority of the Vedas as calculated to point out the path to salvation' (23). The same author adds: 'It was not the metaphysical doctrines of Buddhism that influenced the masses of the people. What proved attractive was its ethical side'. Yet a time was to come when the same religion got bogged down in its dry rituals and customs and failed to inspire the people thus setting the stage of its decay. In Bhandarkar's words 'the Brahminic revival must be regarded as synchronous with the decline of early Buddhism and the rise of 'Mahayanism'.

Historical data are available to show that the Jains did not look upon the Hindus with a sense of fraternity. 'In Jain texts the Brahmanas are held in contempt and are represented as the



opponents of the Jain religion. Frequently the term *dhijjai* (dhik jati) "condemned caste" is used for them contemptuously. In Jain *Suttas* . . . generally the primary position in society is assigned to the Khatriyas instead of the Brahmanas' (24. 140). This author has unearthed further evidence to show that 'Maha-vira and Buddha tried to improve their (the low caste people) lot to a great extent' but had to face strong opposition from the Brahmins. Even the natural expression of joy through music and dancing by the low caste people were not tolerated and the Brahmins 'belaboured them with kicks and blows and turned them out of the town'. This psychological argument that a new faith and idea rises out of the ashes of its predecessor can be supported by the illustrations provided by the advent of Brahmo religion which took place almost the other day. Its origin can be traced to the decadent state of Hinduism as it was practised in Bengal during the declining period of the Muslim rule. Brahmo religion was not a reaction or protest yet it aimed at introducing refreshing tone in the basic tenets of Hinduism; nonetheless, it has to be accepted as a form of psychological denial of the current order. Social reactions generated against Brahmoism is a fact which can hardly be denied. The orthodox Hindus treated the Brahmos as men and women outside human pale. What is of significance here is that this reaction itself tells some untold tales. Arya Samaj movement is another example that can be cited here even though its role was different from Brahmo Samaj.

However it would be unfair not to make a mention of the fact here that we do not find any evidence of systematic religious persecution during the Hindu-Buddhistic period. Huen-Tsiang has no doubt mentioned of his having *heard of* Shasanka's persecuting the Buddhists in Bengal and Mihirkula's similar acts of cruelty perpetrated in Kashmir. About the former, Rhys Davids after a thorough scrutiny of facts has said: 'however great Sasan-ka's enmity to Buddhism may have been, we have no certainty that he actually persecuted the followers of that religion.' As for the latter, the events appear to have been different. Mihirkula following his invasion of Gandhāra cruelly carried out mass murder on political grounds which could not be described as religious persecution. 'On the contrary, his (Mihirkula's) own ministers are described as Buddhists, and the account given (in

the Raj Tarangini which is Kashmere's ancient recorded history), even if true in the main, is evidence, not of persecution, but of fiendish cruelty. Possibly the man (Mihirkula) was mad' (25. 87).

Looking retrospectively we now find Jainism almost assimilated in the Hindu fold, but Buddhism is not, though it is possible that quite a few Buddhists were reconverted, but to view Buddhism as a mere offshoot of Hinduism may perhaps give a sort of spiritual solace but it would be a distorted picture. It is conceded that Buddha is held as an avatar and retained as such within the Hindu fold and this speaks well of the assimilating character of Hinduism but there is no reason to believe that the Buddhists have reciprocated the sentiment. The Buddhist travellers in the past almost invariably have referred to the Hindus as heretics. Viewing the existing conditions can we say that Buddhism is treated as a branch of Hinduism by the census operators? These questions are relevant in the present context since here we are not evaluating theological and metaphysical merits and demerits of religions, our interest lies in examining the different aspects of religion *vis-à-vis* nationality.

## III

Religion, psychologically speaking, possesses a dual characteristic, its discriminative and selective roles distinguish one religion from another, and these function along with another force, viz. of cohesion and consolidation among its members brought about by the intra-group pull. However, this broad spectacle of unison breaks down if we enter into a particular religious field; we then find the subdivisions of Catholics and Protestants, Shias and Sunnis, and within the Hindu fold itself the diverging tendency is still greater. As a matter of fact within each religious group there can be found many more subdivisions and stratifications than may be detected from a detached distance. In this perspective all the religious bodies appear to bear certain similarities, but then there are dissimilarities too. Hinduism, for instance, is a label to distinguish it from other religious labels like Buddhism and Christianity. It would however prove arduous to describe this nomenclature. To the question: who is Hindu, it is not as easy to answer compared to the question:

who is Muslim. A Christian is a person who subscribes to the gospels, adheres or at any rate tries to adhere to the ten commandments and accepts Jesus as the saviour of mankind. A Muslim in following the *arkaans* believes in one god and accepts Mohammad as his prophet, is expected to pray five times a day, fast during the month of Ramzan, take to *zakaat* or charity and go on pilgrimage to Mecca. Could these descriptions or a replica of these be applicable to the Hindu? To say that the Hindu believes in the Vedas and Puranas or Srutis and Smritis would not take us far in our understanding. This, in all probability, the Brahmans may do, but this criterion would be hardly applicable to the mass of the people. The religious training of a Hindu is of by-the-way character. Brahmans no doubt have certain opportunities of religious training as it is afforded in the *upanayan* or holy thread ceremony but a non-Brahmin Hindu more often than not learns casually to realize his Hindu status. Yet two Hindus do feel an akinness, the sense of belongingness draws them closer together, as no doubt all the members of each community feel. What causative factor may be ascribed to the rise of this feeling of belongingness? Here we can afford to look at only some of the salient points of the probable answer.

The Christians and the Jews, the Arabs and the Magians have all one thing in common: a divine commission, one interpreter like Jesus or Moses, Mohammad or Zoroaster. Hinduism has none and in a way this proves helpful since he does not have to remain alert to save his saviour. The Christians have their ten commandments, the Muslims their *arkaans* and the Jews their *tora* and each functions like vinculum to hold the faithful together. The Bible, Quran or Pentateuch can be made available to the masses, not the Vedas and Samhitas; a Hindu derives solace from Ramayana and Mahabharata which may not be held as the focal point of the total Hindu religion since these epics cannot be compared with the gospels. Hinduism is not a creed, it had no apostles and yet for centuries it has survived in providing with a spectral mass of beliefs.

A Hindu child unlike his Christian or Muslim counterpart is not indoctrinated, he undergoes, so to say, a process of acculturation in living. Actually it is through the various media of living his routine life that he comes to regard himself a Hindu. Speaking of the common man, he has little contact with Vedas or

Brahmanas, Nyaya or Mimamsa, is less conformist that way and cares less for the esoteric intricacies involved in the various schools of thought. He is initiated to a code of conduct which starts as a *force majeure* and then in course of time it grows into an irresistible compulsion of a force which appears to him as *sui generis*. A few rudimentary postulates like the immortality of the *atman*, deliverance or *moksha* he comes to regard as the core belief but more emphasis is laid on the daily rituals, customs and manners, observation of caste distinction, ceremonies and festivals. It is this penumbra of religious behaviour rather than the umbra of a consolidated body of religious dogmas with which he feels more at home.

Brahminical Hinduism essentially has remained the concern of purohits and pundits. The Sudras, as a matter of fact all but the Brahmins, were not allowed any access to the sacred texts. Surprisingly enough it was the Sudra who was in need of guidance most but he was deprived the most. As Manu makes it clear, 'A code which must be studied with extreme care by every learned *Brahman* and fully explained to his disciples, but *must be taught by no other man of an inferior class*'. This issue is raised here for the reason that there appears to exist a marginal disparity between what may be termed as the core religion as we may find in the metaphysical doctrines enunciated in a religion and its fringe consisting of the social expression of rites and rituals related to a religious order. To distinguish the two we find that it is quite possible for a man to adhere to the former without evincing zeal in the latter just as it is possible to practise the latter without any knowledge of its connection with the former. Panikkar has correctly observed: 'It is the body of domestic ritual which makes a Hindu. The dogmas of Hinduism can be adopted by others. Karma and transmigration find acceptance among an increasing number of followers of other religions in modern times. Hindu law can apply to others. There are indeed sects of other religions who are subject to Hindu law. The acceptance of domestic ritual alone makes one a Hindu' (26).

There is no religion which is devoid of its sacerdotal forms but Hindu religion as we have known it for the last two thousand years certainly has got more than its due share in the sense that its adherents lean more heavily on this aspect than what was labelled as the core of the religion. When a religion ceases to

be a creed and is taken as a way of life it creates susceptibilities of being influenced by other factors which may not have close bearing on religious sources. Dr. Radhakrishnan observes that 'Hinduism is not a definite dogmatic creed' and adds 'but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realisation' (27). Accepting the first part of the statement which is quite obvious we find the latter part applicable only to a small minority of pious and holy men. 'Hinduism', he adds, 'requires every man to think steadily on the life's mystery until he reaches the highest revelation' (. 49). Could we say for certain that it is in this spirit that this religion is accepted by the vast multitude of the people who call themselves Hindus? A common man, and it is he who concerns us here, has little time or training to be engrossed in spiritual thought, self-realisation and highest revelation. He accepts religion as the backbone of his social life and looks upon it as the ethical compass to guide his conduct in everyday life. He is more interested to see in his religious *practices* something concrete and tangible to match with his own life. His actions are the echoes of his beliefs. It is for this reason that the epics and the Puranas have proved to contain greater appeal than the Vedas, worshipping tangible images whether of Vishnu or Krishna has gained in by far greater popularity than the intangible *upāsanas*. He feels more at home with Rama and Krishna, Kāli and Lakshmi than the Vedic gods Vayu and Indra, Mitra and Varuna. Incidentally, this may be one of the psychological reasons as to why the catholic form of Christianity has succeeded in providing greater appeal among Indians than the Protestant religion. It may be repeated that it is not for a student of psychology to enter into the polemics of religion. It is not to our interest here to make a comparative evaluation of religions. What is of import is the study of the manifestations of religiosity, and therefore the actual practices are of greater interest. Calling idolater is calling names and that does not help much in our understanding. Analysing the psychology of worship it is difficult to maintain that any religion can totally avoid idolatry in one form or another. Psychologically it is impracticable if not impossible to concentrate on nothingness. Christ's cross, Mary's image or Buddha's tooth, Holy Books of the Sikhs and Muslims differ little in their psychological functions when these are compared to the idols that the Hindus wor-

ship. *Image* of sacredness there must be, something to give shape of tangibility and realism to represent something which is intangible. As a well-known historian has observed: 'It is part of the wisdom of the Roman Church to accept what it cannot prevent. It accepts and subordinates to its system the ineradicable polytheism of Mediterranean man. The pagan genius became the Christian angel, the pagan Isis the Christian Madonna, the pagan hero became the Christian Saint, the pagan festival the Christian feast. . . . It accepted statues and paintings, the worship of relics and the pilgrimage to shrines in which relics were placed' (28). Against this background there is little difference noticed in the treatment of the idols and images, Quran or Granth Sahib. Anyway the Hindu has more than that. His ardent desire to uphold the traditions and maintain the caste distinctions (apart from the religious castes there are some 3,000 odd professional and totem castes), accepting the festivals as quasi-religious or religious functions, his faith on the evil spirits (in addition to the heaven and hell provided in almost all religions) and appeasing the unholy spirits, all these go to demarcate the extensive boundary of Hinduism.

The rites and rituals, solemn ceremonies and gay festivals may have arisen from the respective religions (actually the opposite is nearer to the truth) but it is not always easy to trace the source. Regional customs and manners may be dictated by many other forces than religious. The primitive fear is not killed, it lies there dormant. Pandit Nehru was quite correct when he once remarked that in a way we are all tribal. Sophisticated civilization is skin deep, scratch it and out comes the primitive man; this is revealed never better than in dire distress as in international hostilities. In crisis a man, as well as a nation and a community, comes out in its original garb. At any rate, it is this aspect in religion, what may be termed as cultural conventions, which is easier to grow and which dies hard. A common man is tied down to the cultural conventions forming the fringe of a religion more than the strictly delineated religious creed and this is so in the case of all religions, more or less. A common Hindu inhabiting the rural India hardly if ever spends time in intuitive meditation or in realizing the true self, he is not bothered about the fact that the Aryans—whose descendant he may proudly proclaim himself to be—consumed beef, may remain

deaf to the fact that remarriage of widows was made permissible by quite a few authors of *dharma shastras*. He acts according to the conventions he has witnessed being followed, he re-acts his past generation, as a matter of fact he is a living continuation of the racial mneme. It is these social practices which are of importance in the formation of groups and communities and which we will have occasions to examine in further detail.

#### I V

We may now examine the possible role of language in moulding a nationality. The few questions that we may try to answer here are: other conditions remaining the same is it necessary for all the people in a large community to speak one language in order to designate the community as a nationality? If so, should this language be different from the language spoken by other nationalities? Is there enough historical evidence to prove that India at its different stages in history possessed a common language to form a link in the chain of communities? If so, whom did the language link, a segment of the total population or *all* irrespective of differences in caste, creed and community? Was this language a property of the Indian soil in the sense that it grew and flourished within the boundaries of this country and thus has always remained distinguishable from other parental languages? These are some of the issues which could find relevant place here though all of them cannot be adequately dealt with.

The case studies of nationality *vis-a-vis* language can be classified under two broad groups. In one group we find nationalities recognized as different though they speak the same language. The first case that may be mentioned in this group is that of the British and the Americans. Though they speak English they constitute two different nationalities. Using the same alphabets, very similar basic words and not dissimilar idiomatic expressions they have now evolved two different types of literature and the two communities reflect cultural patterns palpably different. Likewise is the case of the French-speaking Belgians and Canadians; the latter, as we know, constitute a nationality having English as the principal language though the number of French-speaking people is considerable. That is, even though the

French, the Belgians and a large segment of the Canadian population speak French they constitute different nationalities. To take another illustration: the Jewish people who claim to belong to one nationality did not have a common language prior to the coming into existence of the State of Israel. Hebrew is now accepted as the national language of Israel though a large section of the population relies on the Yiddish language which is a mixture of medieval German, Hebrew and Slavic languages.

In the other group mention may first be made of the Swiss people who though constitute one nationality nevertheless speak three different languages, viz. German, French and Italian. Likewise the people of the Belgian nationality have adopted two official languages, viz. French and the Flemish. The Republic of South Africa recognizes both English and Afrikaans as official languages to represent its nationality.

This, however, should not mean that wherever there is one language to represent the country at large this must be the language for the whole domain. For example, Soviet Russia, though it has accepted Russian as the principal language, contains peoples of numerous language groups. Again, English, though it is the proclaimed national language in the United States, all the members of this nationality do not claim equal acquaintance with this language. The American Indians, the Spanish-speaking people in the south-west, or the emigrants who perfunctorily satisfy legal requirements for attaining citizenship are notable exceptions. In the U.K. according to a recent census over 41,000 people speak Welsh only and over a thousand can only speak Gaelic.

Keeping these cases in view it may be concluded for the present that it is not essential to have one language within one territory spoken by all communities of people in order to designate them as members of one nationality. Two different nationalities may adopt the same language or the people of one nationality may speak different languages. However it is to be admitted that a language when mutually accepted as the principal medium of expression may help in more than one way. It may, or may not, thereby bring the people closer together but undeniably it speeds up the administrative machinery which is pertinent to a growing nation endeavouring to grow faster. Looking for an instance we can see that it is primarily for this



reason that the Russian language gradually came to be accepted as the language for intercommunication between the different republics within the U.S.S.R.

However the matter does not rest here. By giving label to an object or an idea we are often tempted to look upon it as an entity, a self-contained entity. This perhaps is a natural inclination but may lead to inaccurate judgment where the entity shows life and growth, for example, language. Let us take the case of the English language. It has grown out of several languages like Latin, French and Teutonic languages and finally it came to have its own status. It does not imply that this entity will remain static, it is liable to change. The Americans who have sufficiently altered the language to suit their cultural needs and now complain wittily that the English people never learnt to speak English may not be far removed from truth since the English in England do not speak American English. Again, the Dutch and the German speak the same language yet these languages have become so much diversified that an unsophisticated Dutch citizen may not be aware of the fact that he speaks German language. So is the case with the Belgians speaking French, which is not exactly the same as the French spoken in France. In our own country we have quite a few illustrations.

Language as a speech habit is acquired in one's life-time like many other habits and therefore is susceptible to modifications under certain conditions. For instance, if left undisturbed by deliberate pressure brought upon it, a language may change in concurrence with, say, the social changes taking place in its surrounding. Thus the highly Sanskritized Bengali (to be compared with modern Hindi bearing rich flavour of Sanskrit) changed to modern Bengali with the rapid transition from feudal state of Bengal to the mercantile state at the time of the advent of the merchant communities from the west. Again, several languages by admixture may give rise to a new language and that is how Urdu became an offspring of Arabic and Persian languages plus local dialects.\* A language may grow in modified forms if its

\* A language may be pushed into a new direction though its longevity may become uncertain. In the heydays of the Muslim League government in Bengal the authorities out of their concern for maintaining majority in every field pressed Urdu words in the Bengali language in the State-sponsored school text-books. But then the amusing product abruptly stopped in its development with the fall of the government.

offshoots remain long divorced from the parental links and are spoken by people isolated from each other and this is illustrated in the case of the Dutch and German languages. What is known as Chinese language to its foreigners actually denotes a family of mutually unintelligible languages which, it is presumed, have sprung from one or two primary sources. India abounds in illustrations in new languages evolving following the deviation of their course from the original language, and developing within regions which are comparatively isolated from the original source. Thus Assamese, Bengali, Oriya and Maithili have originated from what was once called Magadhi language, whereas Gujarati, Punjabi, Rajasthani and Western Hindi can be traced to the Sauraseni dialect. It remains to be seen whether in Pakistan languages like Bengali, Sindhi and Urdu will sustain their present character, so much resembling their parental forms in India, or by taking different lines of development they may ultimately emerge in new forms a century hence.

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It is neither from the theoretical-cum-ideological standpoint nor from the cases cited above that it can be deduced that one language is an inescapable formula for establishing a nationality. Taking the case of India we find that its nationality is already established on the grounds of sovereignty and this has been recognized by other governments. The keen desire evinced in some quarters to have one national (?) language grows out of the wish for cultural homogeneity which is something altogether different from one nationality. A confusion begins to arise when a fact and a wish are mixed together. The belief that a cultural constancy can be evolved out of one language and that this would finally strengthen the political nationality is not only hypothetical but as we shall see later is a clumsy hypothesis. It presumes that one language is an essential criterion for one nation and this as we have seen is not correct. It presumes that cultural homogeneity is a possibility but factual evidence would show that it is a tall order. Again, it presumes that cultural laws and political laws are interchangeable and this is a debatable issue. Finally, this presumption also entails certain grave dangers. Once a language is forced upon the reluctant people it would open the possibilities of using force in many other directions.

The cry of *Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan* was once a quite popular slogan and this closely resembled its sister slogan, *Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Fuhrer*.

By way of providing a historical background to the problems of national integration it is said that Sanskrit language in the past was an important unifying factor. 'It was not only the language of religion and scholarship but of the royal courts and the law courts. Besides, it was the language of intercourse between people from various parts of the country. Various regions had their own *prakrits*, popular dialects, many of which were developing into distinct languages with literary products of a high order. . . . But Sanskrit was, *par excellence*, the national link language' (3. 9). Missionary zeal in any sphere of social melioration is commendable provided it does not give credence to fancy over facts. Presuming that the statement was not made in haste and in view of the fact that it has some significant implications we should examine its accuracy.

It may be admitted that a historical period extending over thousands of years when compressed in a sentence the perspective is liable to suffer and the foreshortening in describing may cause semantic confusion. We have already seen in the previous sections that the concept of people as we understand it today did not obtain in the past history of India. This term we now use in a connotation vastly dissimilar to the ancient or medieval periods. As a matter of fact the language of the then 'people' is left in mystery. Sanskrit was the language of the sophisticated priests and Brahmins. As a reputed scholar of philology has observed: 'Students of linguistic history of India are particularly prone to think of Sanskrit as the only language to be considered, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was but *one* of many dialects, even though its importance as an instrument of culture far exceeds that of all the rest put together' (29. 243).

The Aryans being nomadic tribes continued to move from one place to another; it was perhaps this way that the Brahminical rituals and religion as also the language spread in the different regions. The language in which the rituals and ceremonies were performed was not the language of the masses, as it is not so even today. The people spoke in Prakrata languages which meant common or spoken languages. *Sanskrita* means polished and chaste dialect of literature. It would be wrong to portray

Sanskrit as the bazaar language spoken by all in the land of Aryavarta.

Secondly, there is hardly anything to prove that intercourse among the people of various parts of the country was prevalent, the opposite would be nearer to the truth. It would be inappropriate to push the present imagery in the distant past. In the Mahabharata it is mentioned that in the battle of Kurukshetra all sorts of people had taken part. This is quite possible but this could not be treated as a historical evidence of continued intercommunication among the different tribes of people inhabiting the land and using one language. History will record that in the nineteen sixties, mercenaries speaking alien tongues fought with the natives of certain countries in Asia and Africa. It would not thereby be proved that these aliens were the sons of the soil nor that there was easy communication between the masses of people in Asia and Africa as the Directors of Tourism would like to see it growing. These however may be set aside as minor indiscretions in making a major statement quoted before; what however cannot be treated as trivial is the unscientific method of portraying the position of Sanskrit *vis-a-vis* the country as a whole and which spread over thousands of years.

The statement quoted goes to create an impression that Sanskrit (Vedic Sanskrit?) was a contained language of India, that it remained unaltered all through the subsequent ages, that some dialects no doubt grew as offshoots though the old Sanskrit was the binding force and that other languages as the Dravidian languages were non-existent. This kind of compressed statement which may be misinterpreted as psychological wish fulfilment is liable to do more harm than bring the expected results.

The present Indian languages like all other languages are inter-related. This interlinking has been possible because of the natural mutatory character of languages, provided the doors for intercommunication are not closed. Unless debarred by geographical conditions, as it may happen among the people living in isolated islands, deserts or surrounded by dense forests and mountains, men may come into contact with each other and this is one of the main causes in lingual transposition. The present languages have evolved, most probably, from a fewer languages. This in brief is the genesis of hierarchy in language formation. If the genealogy of our languages were traced it would show

these having had maintained contact with languages originating outside India. In this respect perhaps the Dravidian languages may claim to be purely indigenous languages. It may be worthwhile to examine the question of the origin of the Indian languages.

The basic Indian languages can be traced to the language family which is labelled by the philologists as Indo-European language group. Under this group we are told there are three main sub-groups, viz. Indo-Iranian languages, Greek and Latin. The Indo-Iranian family subsequently diverged into two broad sections, viz. Iranian and Indo-Aryan or Indic. The major Indian languages are the descendants of the Indic, the Dravidian language group and a few others. In the Indo-Iranian family are to be found languages like Persian, Pushto, Avestan. These were originally so closely related that it is difficult to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the Iranian and the Indic. Speaking of the Avestan language it is maintained that 'almost any Sanskrit word may be changed at once into its Avestan equivalent, or vice versa, merely by applying certain phonetic laws'. The Indo-Aryan languages as it may be seen did not remain a constant and unalloyed version of one language as a property to be socially inherited by the future inhabitants of the then Aryavarta. These bore recognizable links in philology and phonetics with other ancient languages outside India.

However, the Indics proceeded to develop within the region of Aryavarta changing in form in the course of time and place. This ancient group of languages is called Prakrits of which Sanskrit was one. Let it be borne in mind that the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas were composed in the chaste form of Prakrit, viz. Sanskrit and which had no access to any other class but the Brahmins—who acted as the sole agents of the Vedas and did not permit learning of this core religion by any other community except the Brahmins. Under the circumstances it could have formed a link language only among the Brahmins.

That the old form of Sanskrit did change is proved from the language in Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, etc. The stage at which these sacred texts were composed is given the name of Primary Prakrit. Apparently the different forms of Prakrit languages were on the way of multiplying. It was during this end phase of the Vedic period that Panini composed the Sanskrit

grammar 'which effectively stopped all growth of this literary language. From that time Sanskrit ceases to be a natural, spontaneous language and in the course of age it gets more and more artificial'. As another scholar of Indian philology has stated 'We know that a language that is bound by Grammar and passes into literary stage is less apt to develop than one that is less fettered. Moreover the language of the people was already making rapid progress, leaving Sanskrit only to be a language of books and of the learned' (30. 161). In Tarporewalla's views Sanskrit '*has always remained the literary language par excellence of India*' [emphasis mine].

The second stage in the development of the Indian dialect languages is known as the period of Secondary Prakrits roughly estimated between 600 B.C. and A.D. 1000. It was during this stage that a Prakritic form developed into Pali. Buddha's gospels were preached to a larger section of the population and naturally he chose the language of a prevalent dialect common in his native place. The growth of this religion may have given additional impetus to the development of this dialect into its literary form. However, during the centuries covered by the Secondary Prakrit we come across one of its forms used in Asoka's inscription, another form in which Buddhistic scriptures were written, a third form employed in Jaina writings and yet in another form in which the earliest Sanskrit plays of Asvaghosha were composed.

The end-phase of the Secondary Prakrit stage is characterized by discernible changes in the Sanskrit dramas that were composed by Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and others. This Sanskrit, as the students of comparative philology observe bears distinguishable marks of departure from Asvaghosha's Sanskrit and of course is remarkably different from Vedic Sanskrit. Anyway, among the modern Indian languages, Maharashtra language came to be established during this period—literary language as differentiated from its dialectical form. Following the trails of linguistic palaeontology we find Prakrit languages gradually dying in colloquial forms given the name of Apabhramsa. The broad rivers now ended in branches and rivulets before reaching a sea of languages. Incidentally, Latin also evolved from an ancient dialect of Rome before 300 B.C. and ended in the Romance languages, viz. Portuguese, Spanish, Capa-

lan, French, Italian, Ladin a moribund language in Switzerland and Dalmatian now dead and extinct.

The Apabhramsa forms of Prakrit dialects later generated the modern Indian languages. If these Apabhramsa languages were casually treated we would then fail to take lessons from philology. The Apabhramsas may have started in their course as languages of not much literary or religious significance but these were the languages in which the majority of the people communicated with each other. Again, it is from these basic dialects that many of the modern Indian languages have evolved some of which gained in status at par with any of the classical languages. The claims of Sanskrit as a link language is not only an unsubstantiated claim but the attitude in maintaining this claim may cause due alarm in those who may not see eye to eye with this claim. Sanskrit ultimately continues to remain the cultural *piece de resistance* of the Brahmans. It would be interesting to survey the quantum of contribution of non-Brahmans towards the development of Sanskrit in any of its aspects. Further, may it not be that the claims of Hindi at present is an adjunct to the claims of Sanskrit?

However, what we have seen in the above does not give a comprehensive picture of the languages of India. Besides the Indic group of languages which have been outlined above there are three other members of the language family in India, viz. Austric, Tibeto-Chinese and Dravidian. Almost all the modern Indian languages in one form or another can be traced to these four major groups of parental languages.

The Austric group comprises of languages whose speakers are not numerous compared to those following the Indic group but undoubtedly they cover a wide area. This vast group, the Austro-Asiatic branch, has given rise to the languages like Khasi, Santhali and Nicobar languages in India and also the Indonesian and Malayese languages in the east.

The Tibeto-Chinese stock, more precisely Tibeto-Burman, has produced a vast assembly of languages like the Naga, Garo, Bodo, Dafla, Abor to mention a few and these are mostly located in Assam. It is through the Tibeto-Chinese channels that there have grown the languages of Burma and Thailand. Incidentally, a considerable body of the Ahom people migrated from the Shan States in Burma in the thirteenth century and they were

assimilated in the Assamese culture and language group in all ways barring in the marital sphere.

The Dravidian group is the most important language group after the Aryan languages. Historically it had its own existence even before the Aryans came to this land. Far off in the mountains of Baluchistan there are a few thousand people who speak a language called Brahui which is actually a Dravidian language. It is surmised that Dravidian languages had a much wider field prior to the infiltration of the Aryans. This group comprises the languages spoken in South India like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Toda. The earliest of the Dravidian written languages dates from 3rd century B.C. when probably the first Tamil grammar was written. Besides these four language groups there are also a few to be put down as unclassified.

The broad conclusions that may be derived from the foregoing discussion may here be briefly summarized. Firstly, in any modern conception of State religion need not be accepted as a criterion for determining nationality. Neither may we insist upon one language spoken by all the people to commit them to a nationality. Nationality, as a sociological nomenclature may be composed of various religions and languages. Utility of one common language may arise on pragmatic grounds and for reasons of practical consideration, but this fact should be viewed separately from reasons of constituting a nationality.

Secondly, there is no evidence to maintain that in the ancient past there existed any such language which may fit in with our conception of 'link language' which essentially means a language of the masses or *lingua franca*. Since a common language develops under the pressure of social needs of intercourse there is little to justify that such needs existed between 2nd century B.C. and 12th century A.D. when this sub-continent had remained divided into numerous kingdoms which remained isolated due to lack of easy means of communication. Since trade and commerce were mainly conducted on the basis of barter deals these could not have provided impetus to the growth of a common language.

Thirdly, the claim of Sanskrit as a 'link language' does not appear to be justified. If at all it linked any people it were the priestly class of people numerically who constituted the smallest segment of population. It may be remembered that Sanskrit is



a language had to face the danger of extinction during the Moghul period.

Fourthly, it is erroneous to believe that Sanskrit as such has remained unaltered and unalloyed down the ages commencing from the Vedic period. This belief may have grown out of iteration on other grounds but academic.

Finally, by giving importance to Sanskrit while ignoring other parental forms of the Indian languages disservice may be inadvertently done to the cause of integration. It is in this connection, it may be mentioned, that a language should not be looked upon as devaluated since it has originated from another language. This attitude is liable to be interpreted as an attempt to proselyte and convert rather than integrate various cultures.

## *Chapter 4*

### *HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CRITERIA*

#### *I*

THE CLAIMS OF common history as a determining factor of nationality if taken at face value may not be easy to sustain. The Polish nationality is an instance in point. For long the Poles remained divided as nationals of Austria, Prussia and Russia, and during this long period the destiny of the Poles lay with the destiny of the countries they inhabited albeit as a minority community. It was also during this period of subjugation that the national feeling crystallized around the predominant catholic religion of the Poles and their language. At the end of the First World War the new Republic of Poland was established and the Poles came to have a common homeland which from then onwards was to have a history of its own. Likewise, the Jews did not have a commonality in their history until Israel came into being. In other words, lack of geographical history does not necessarily prevent the growth and development of a nationality, provided there are other ties strong enough to bring the people closer together. In the case of the Poles the ties were provided mainly by their religion and language. The latter grew into substance because of the constant threats by the Austrian and Russian monarchies who were out to deny and destroy the existence of the Polish language. The Polish language had sustained in its existence and development on the nourishment provided by the forces of reaction. This principle of reaction has given impetus to many other nationalities including the Indian which we shall discuss in another chapter.

The Jewish people had something in their religion which had distinguished its adherents from the rest. At the time of Moses all other religions then in existence, those of the Assyrians and

Babylonians for instance, had their national gods and pagan forms of worshipping with heliolithic rites and sacrificial offerings. But the god in heaven, as Moses and Abraham proclaimed, was a concept radically departing from the then prevalent pagan religions, and the Jewish religion thus grew in prominence in the background of other religions, and the Jewish people came to have a commonality in religious views.

Looking from this point of view the inhabitants of India until recently did not have occasions to enjoy a common history. This vast peninsula comprised a large number of kingdoms and states independent or otherwise and their history showed the absence of commonality. It would not be quite correct to interpret the authors who have used history as a criterion of nationality in the sense of political history. There are reasons to believe that history here was meant to signify social and cultural history that go in constructing the framework of nationality. There is no single criterion as powerful in demarcating one nationality from another as is the cultural composition of the communities concerned. But the word 'culture' bears several connotations and therefore needs to be examined. This word may be used in demarcating human relationship, or judged against the criteria of cultural products, often the expression is left amorphous or too many ideas are compressed in too short a space. Looking at it from the point of view of cultural products, the word culture would convey a static picture; on the other hand when culture is intended to mean a transmitting process within the society it poses dynamic problems. There exists a certain amount of anomaly in our understanding this term, in its application in the social life, in determining its criteria and dimensions, and so on. Less is our understanding of the psychological mechanism operating behind the growth and development of culture and its assimilation in a community, and therefore these require a more detailed scrutiny.

## II

Culture is one nomenclature which has remained the most favourite pabulum for parley among the social psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and, lately, philosophers also are joining the fray. The interest of psychologists in this subject

is more or less limited to the observing of how the cultural forces act; anthropologists and sociologists have shown more keenness in the analysis of the content of culture, its traits and values, as expressed in the different communities, large or small. However, efforts are now being made to correlate the common denominators in the observations and thinking and to negotiate for a meeting ground.

There are quite a few terminologies in current use in social sciences which were actually borrowed from common vocabulary. These words had found their place in dictionary long before science itself came into existence and later on the words were pressed into service to convey technical meaning and thus arose ambiguity. *Intelligence* is one such term and *culture* is another. When a roused teacher in the class room categorically denies that his pupil possesses any intelligence what he actually means to convey is that the boy does not possess the amount of common sense that the teacher may like to see in the lad, and this may be his personal opinion. In fact no person can be entirely devoid of what in psychological terminology is called intelligence. Apparently the meaning of intelligence is used differently by the average teacher and the psychologist. The word culture likewise produces no fewer labyrinths in semantics. When a person in wrath dubs X as uncultured specimen of humanity he most probably wants to air his view that X has not attained that status in culture which he thinks he has and in this way he may be correct to an extent since no one is prepared to accept that he is less cultured than the other person. It is here that we have to guard against the dual meaning of the term alternately appearing and creating confusion. In using the term culture it is not intended to convey social status and neither should the word be employed for comparative evaluation in the sense of high and low. Culture stands for the various expressional means through which a group, a community or society comes to be known as a unit in itself. Culture is not devoid of ethical values but such values should be looked upon as serving a specific purpose *within* the group leaving little scope for its evaluation against another group. The institution of marriage can be regarded as a means of cultural expression. In all known societies marriage provides an occasion to observe certain social formalities, and these forms distinguish one community from

another. We may compare the marriage ceremony in two communities against the criteria of, say, social laws involved, altruism of the group concerned, local customs and so on, but we are not entitled to assess their disparity or proximity on one scale of value which has no material existence. Factually, there is no man, or community, bereft of culture though it would be true to say that no two communities show exactly the same mode of cultural expression.

Culture as defined in the dictionary stands for 'the pattern of all those arrangements, material and behavioural, whereby a particular society achieves for its members greater satisfactions than they can achieve in a state of nature. It includes social institutions and "knowledge", belief, art, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.' Culture stands for the particular *pattern* of a man's expressions within his social framework and which may distinguish him from a member of another community. It stands for his daily habits; the way he reacts to others either in his community or outside, the ethical rules with which he is guided in his daily life, language and religion that he may pursue and profess. Studies in the culture of *A* and *B* groups are designed to bring out the characteristic differences and not weigh or assess their superiority or inferiority. Culture in the scientific sense does not signify 'cultured' behaviour, it merely denotes social heredity. As Ralph Linton has defined it, 'A culture is the configuration of learned behaviour and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society', and this definition is now widely accepted. The definition also makes it clear as to why estimation of culture is not possible. When we say an act is good compared to another which is not so good what we actually mean to say is that the composition of the first action contains something which is more in quantity compared to the other action. But there is no absolute measure that we can employ in assessing the character of a culture. Head hunting may be held as an offensive pastime by the Tamil or the Gujarati but among the Nagas of certain clans this practice decides the status of a man in the society and is taken into cognizance in arranging marriages. Head hunting in the Naga clan perhaps serves the same purpose as affluence indicated in the bank balance among

the Gujarati or the security of government service among the Tamils. It is for this reason that 'a resulting stance emerged within anthropology which is usually called *cultural relativism* or *cultural relativity*. This is a viewpoint which *looks at standards of behaviour as relative to each cultural tradition*'. In other words, in comparing two cultural patterns we intend to determine whether a trait is present or not but cannot indulge in making comparison of the ethical standard involved since the ethical norm of each community bears values set in by the community and is applicable with reference to that community alone. It is not feasible to decide whether it is ethical or otherwise to eat fish; a Rajasthani woman may not eat fish strictly on grounds of religious custom whereas in Bengal a woman ceases to eat fish when she is widowed! We may instead seek for the sources which give rise to cultural patterns.

By pattern of culture here we mean the emerging total picture of acts that one may perform in the course of his everyday life. It is obvious that each act like eating or worshipping has many ways of doing it, there are indefinite shades, nuances in each act—the word behaviour would be more appropriate—and these combine like a mosaic in various forms. It is certainly interesting to observe how a rather limited number of broad cultural determiners like eating and clothing, worship and marriage have given rise to an infinite varieties of culture. But one would cease to be amazed if one analysed the nuances of each determiner and traced its origin.' It may be mentioned incidentally that all the colour that we see in everyday life are the combinations in different strength of only three primary colours, but the resulting number of combinations is estimated to be about a million!

Sociologists and anthropologists have produced an enormous amount of literature in abstracting and describing the cultural characteristics of the innumerable cultures which they have studied including those of the modern civilized man as also of the primitive tribal people. These studies give different social perspectives when viewed from specific angles, e.g. of kinship or marriage, worship or festival. 'Volumes may be written using only one criterion to show how it exists in different forms in different communities or how it serves the purpose of binding together the members of a community. Again, any of these

social criteria when used to define a community may have infinite aspects each of which may tell something of the upholders of the tradition. To illustrate this point we may take one or two common expressional means of culture and see for ourselves how an apparently unimportant and insignificant aspect in our daily life may possess a force of social heritage distinguishing one group from another. A few stray cases have been taken here to show how a social habit of custom may grow from multifarious sources, and also, how this custom may provide with forces in the intra-group pull.

We eat in order to maintain metabolic process in the body which aids in the continuance of our existence. Eating therefore results from biological necessities, as is the need for shelter, clothing, marriage, etc. It would be interesting to look at the reasons of eating and how we eat. In order to meet the biological needs we have to eat food containing so much of protein and carbohydrate, salt and vitamins all of which we get from any type of food commonly consumed. Man by nature is omnivorous in the sense that he can live on cooked and uncooked food and exist equally well on vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet. Eating raw vegetable was once looked upon as a primitive habit but thanks to our knowledge of vitamins raw vegetables may now be eaten with the confidence of being modern. On religious grounds one person may take to vegetarian food, as other members of his community may do. On the other hand he may do so on economic grounds when he finds the cost of meat and eggs too much for his daily budget. He may also give up meat during the summer and here weather would be responsible for his change in diet. His use of his right hand in eating is believed to be of biological origin since this phenomenon we see even among the most isolated and primitive tribes as well as in the higher apes. As for the time of eating, a poor clerk who has to reach office by 10 A.M. may be compelled to take his meal in the morning whereas his boss who may have gone up from the bottom may now take his lunch at noon. Again a rural woman in U.P. would not like to eat along with her husband nor the wife of a Brahman anywhere in India since both have preferred to remain unaffected by modern ideas and willingly have accepted the lower status assigned to the woman some thousands of years

ago.\* While the Brahmin woman is forbidden to eat along with her husband owing to the religious codes, the rural woman reacts in the same way but it may be for different reasons, for instance the inhibitions may arise owing to her superstitious belief that even well-cooked morsel can be rendered evil if glanced upon by an evil eye. An unsophisticated mother, in the middle-class home would not think of eating with children and her husband lest a favourite dish may prove much wanted and she may not give all that is there and here sentiment prevails; if you invite an orthodox Tamil or Malayali Brahman to eat along with a non-Brahman you may well-nigh expect a miniature revolution brewing whereas member of the Young Bengal group in the early nineteenth century just to parade ostentatiously their contempt for traditions ate beef in public. Eating food therefore could have bearing on political changes or vice versa. An orthodox Brahman in U.P. may not refuse *puri* at a non-Brahman house but cooked rice he would. Fried *puri* is considered *kutchra* and so carries no taboo but boiled rice is *pukka* and cannot be eaten outside the caste pale. Incidentally, the word *so* in the last sentence is supposed to stand for logical inference, whereas logic there is none. He is not prepared to accept it as a convention but must protrude this prejudice to religious lengths. A similar Brahman in Bengal may refuse all cooked food at a non-Brahman house. The salt may bear social values of its own. It may signify potent force in casteism and so a visitor may prefer himself to mix the salt in the unsalted curry dished to him, or this social habit may arise from the fact that by consuming salt at a house the invitee is committed to do no harm—doing any harm to a person after eating his salt is a taboo and the visitor may like to keep his way clear to save his conscience in case of an eventuality. One may wash his hands and mouth prior to his meals on hygienic grounds, or because of the long standing traditions in the community, or because of his knowledge that this ablution has been clearly laid down by Manu.<sup>1</sup> An unpretentious Nepali cultivator would

\* 'Let him neither eat with his wife, nor look at her eating' (Manu, IV. 43). However, an amusing 'scientific' explanation is provided by an author according to whom man is more important than woman because the central nervous system is more predominant in the man and therefore he should eat first and the left overs may be used by the woman! (*South Indian Customs* by P. V. J. Ayyar).



think nothing of eating exactly the same food day in and day out for years together, a praiseworthy habit which may upturn your sanity if you repeated it. A Maharashtrian would commence his meal with a sweet dish whereas this is the last dish at a Bengali dinner and both the communities are amused at each other for no plausible reason and it is for this reason also that social anthropologists are not agreeable to introduce ethical evaluation in the cultural traits.

These are only a few questions that could be raised in connection with the food habits and feeding behaviour in man, and eating represents quite a minor segment of expressions of man's total behaviour in the course of a day. In each field of his daily life we may notice similar peculiarities which are discerning points in a community. In matters sartorial it is not difficult to distinguish a Hindu or Muslim if one watched the bottom edges of pyjama, a common garment in India, since these are stitched in different manners. The style of pyjama varies in Kashmir, Punjab and U.P. The Maharashtrian and Tamil women wear the sari in a way not found anywhere in India (and it is alleged that there was a close ethnological link between these two communities in the past). There is a certain amount of resemblance in the female style of wearing clothes in Assam and Cutch but the materials used make all the difference. It is not difficult to locate the native place of a rural woman from the way she dons her sari or from the utensils she uses in her kitchen. A correct portraiture and appraisal of the kitchen in an Indian household can be a very good subject for a Ph.D. thesis since the kitchen is Indian woman's fortress as well as an important station for cultural intercourse. Ways of greeting vary substantially from one region to another if we care to notice how the socially equals treat each other, or to show distinctions in age and sex. The conversational styles in using the pronouns *tu, tum, aap* so current in north India is not prevalent everywhere in the west or in the south. •

All these distinctive features put together constitute cultural differences. These are like individual pieces in a jig-saw puzzle. If any of these were severed from the total behaviour it would appear in isolation as a puzzle but viewed in the totality of the community of behaviour its contribution in forming the configuration can be easily recognised. The word configuration

here bears a specific significance and requires explanation. By way of illustrating the point, it may be mentioned that it is difficult indeed to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the Hindu Assamese culture and Hindu Bengali culture. Both are predominantly rice eaters and lay premium on fish, their languages have evolved from the same source and the alphabets they use are almost exactly the same though pronunciation varies enormously. Both these communities were considerably influenced by religious leaders in the sixteenth century preaching very similar Vaishnav doctrines—Chaitanya in Bengal and Sankar Dev in Assam. Yet it would be too late to say that they are the same ethnical groups. The attitude towards women in these two states is not exactly the same. The amount of reverence shown towards the women is much more in Assam than in Bengal though the respect does not follow the lines of Western civilization. In Assam the tribal population is significantly large and most of these tribes are matriarchal where the woman's position in the society is similar to man's position in the patriarchal culture. Centuries of living together has not left the non-tribal Assamese uninfluenced. It is also possible that worshipping of the goddess Kamakshya may have contributed to the same end; each woman in Kamrup is believed to be a part of this mother goddess (31). The sum total of the similarities and distinctions leaves clear impression of the Bengalis and Assamese as two different communities and the divergence is bound to grow further with the passage of time for reasons to be explained later. Fifty years ago almost all the Assamese school-going boys learnt Bengali and there were a few textbooks in Assamese. Today hardly any Assamese boy or girl takes Bengali as the first language and quite a few Bengali pupils also follow suit. All these characteristic points of similarity and dissimilarity are integrated and tend to remain so in a community. It is this integrated representation that was spoken of as configuration or pattern of culture.

It may be questioned whether culture is an apt term to be used here. Are these behavioural expressions not merely matters of habit? This is true to an extent. These no doubt grow out of repetition of certain acts when performed over and over again generation after generation but physical habit does not explain the whole significance of repetition. An act is called

habitual if it is oft-repeated and there it ends; it does not explain why it is repeated in one community group and not in another. Apparently there are causative forces behind our actions.

In answer to the question—if a man acts thus why does he act so, part of the answer will fall in the biogenetic sphere. Like all other animals man too has to meet his organic needs and the requisite biological demands, and so he eats and eliminates, seeks shelter and fecundates and all these habit patterns he inherits from his parents in the biological sense. These are natural modes of behaviour resulting from organic demands. Experiments have been attempted to see if animals can cohabit even if they were reared in isolation soon after birth and the answer to this query was found to be in the positive though the pattern of first copulatory acts in this case did not tally with the animals leading normal life; nevertheless quickly they learned the whole act by trial and error. Language is one more example. The vocal cords when vibrated by air pressed against them due to inhalation and exhalation of breath produce sound which is modulated in hundreds of different ways due to controlled movements of the lips and tongue and the jaws. The resulting sound is biological end-product but articulation of sound and pronunciation of words are results of training and here we notice the impact of culture of the community on the individual. A Bengali reared all through his youth in a distant state like Kerala or the Punjab is likely to speak in the language he grows accustomed to hear and as naturally as it would be unnatural for him to speak like a Bengali child brought up in his native state.\* It is this *way of doing* which concerns us here.

Secondly, animals are very much bound by stereotyped and repetitive ways of acting though it would not be correct to say that this stereotype verges on mechanical repetition. Nonetheless his action patterns fall short in the margin of dimensional differences that we notice in man, man's actions are ranged with-

\* Badauni has recorded that Akbar in order to 'test the accuracy of the tradition which says "Everyone that is born is born with an inclination to religion" instructed twenty sucklings, who were taken from their mothers for a consideration in money, "to be placed in an empty house (so that they heard no word spoken) which got the name of Dumb-house". After three or four years the children all came out dumb, except some who died there'.

in wide limits, possibilities of not exactly repeating the act are much greater. In other words he learns a good many things from the members within his environment and yet retains his individuality in acting in his own way. Thus arises a possibility in the divergence in his personal action. But he also conforms. He does as others do, others in his community perhaps, and may not copy those who do not belong to his community. The force of conformation is generated by his environment, and this again is derived from habitual customs and manners, religious emotions and feelings, and each of these may be analyzed and isolated by the psychologist or anthropologist only for the sake of closer observations and study, but the isolates do not exist as such, these get inextricably intermixed with passage of time. Dancing originally may have started from the practice of invocation for rain, then turned into an art of delicately narrating events through fixed gestures and *mudras* and may remain in this form in a community. One community may try to further improve upon this form of art and of which the community may feel proud, while another community may mix it up with cha-cha-cha culture and make a nuisance of it.

Broadly speaking this is how certain social habits are adopted and become adapted, but the word habit does not convey the full meaning. These habit patterns are not stereotyped behavioural expressions devoid of ethos; they bear certain values which are shared by the members of a group, shared and also socially transmitted. 'Values are affectively (emotionally) charged tendencies to action which involve preferences, and often conscious choices among alternatives.' Cultural behaviour therefore is not to be equated with sheer biological act. Beyond the biological significance there is something more: it is accompanied by a specific feeling tone which the individual experiences in a subjective way, this affective feeling tone overflows from individual to the majority of the members of a community which gives life to the group and the group ceases to be a mere conglomeration of a number of individuals and thus transcends the mere gregariousness and extension in living. It is this spirit which binds the members of a society, community, and nationality. 'Culture is concerned with actions, ideas, and artifacts which individuals in the tradition concerned learn, share, and value.'

It is by virtue of assimilating the values that social behaviour

can be differentiated from purely physical motive or biological action. We may rightly search for meaning in the behaviour. For scientific scrutiny a phenomenon may have to be analyzed into its minimum units. Thus metal is reduced into the smallest particles of atoms and molecules, physical movement into smallest amount of displacement in time and space and social behaviour is analyzed into traits. A trait is defined as a minimum significant unit of culture. Eating food, as we have seen, is not merely a biological phenomenon, neither does putting a cap or a turban bear only organic significance, these are traits in themselves; lighting an oil lamp or a candle before an image is not simply aimed at dispersing darkness (particularly when electric current is available in the vicinity); opening an account in the bank may have had its precursor in the hoarding habit in animals but this trait in the civilized man has now come to bear its own social significance. It is by making a comparison of these traits that cultural patterns can be verified.

Could we say that manifold cultural affinities and distinctions that we witness have evolved, or have they stayed put on the lines of Noah's ark? If the former is the case, can we lay down any salient principles in evolution? Cautiously speaking a student of science would ponder over the question since the answer cannot be in the nature of yes or no; actually the answer will have to be yes *and* no. Some of these have persisted since the dawn of human civilization. Constructing shelter, communal affinity, alteration of work and play and the latter giving to festivities have their origin in the distant time fogged out in memory. Yet there have been evolutionary changes.

The flux character of the world does not permit relying on any belief of eternal stability, less so in matters which are influenced by continuous changes produced either internally or externally. It is for this reason that speculations are rife regarding cosmic evolution; organic evolution has come to be accepted, and social evolution is not a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless the nature of social evolution still remains in a speculative stage, and it would not be correct to compare it with organic evolution since that would be comparing by analogy which is a good art but bad scientific principle. Yet we have to admit that social change involves man—the animal who is aware of his inadequacies and consequently continues to change ceaselessly.

Fulfilment of these needs and requirements does not necessarily stem out of conscious urges but is vaguely appreciated in the actual situation. One may feel the urgency of running away from a surging crowd but not all our acts can be explained in this manner. In the biological field also the needs act in a subtle way. Birds and animals migrate from the colder region or when food becomes scarce and this action may be compared with man's migration though the bird is not conscious of its needs as man is. However in the course of biological evolution the silent steps of marching time have proved more efficacious. To a biologist time is as much an essential requirement for evolution as are the genetic changes. Temporal factor is no less important in bringing about social differentiation. The mythical concept of struggle for existence may continue to linger in popular mind but in organic evolution there was no struggle and there is none as we understand by this word. Changes in the body structures are caused owing to genetic reasons; accumulated over millions of years these cumulative organic changes if rendered the animal incapable of adapting itself to its environment the animal petered out of existence. If it survived by virtue of its capabilities to match with its own environment it won in the so-called struggle for existence. Again, if the partly changed animal moved away to a new geographical region conducive to its existence the animal bred and multiplied and lived in peace with nature as a new species. On the other hand red ants and the *coelacanth* fish have survived for hundreds of millions of years very much in the same manner as we find them today with their body structure remaining almost unchanged, and also their habits. All these are applicable also to social evolution though we are not entitled to bracket the phenomena of biological and social evolution since the origin of both are not the same. Of the genesis of organic evolution we have now considerable materials to view the change primarily arising in the genes, the smallest units in a living organism, whereas the social evolution refers to extra-organic changes. The evolved species of animals cannot go back to their original forms, they branch and branch out. Whereas, in the social evolution there is at least a theoretical possibility of going back on evolution. Nevertheless a good many similarities can be noticed.

For instance, organic evolution is not a haphazard process, and less so is social evolution. Neither do they move in a straight line as if moving towards a target. Yet both maintain a certain directionality in evolving and in this matter the present is linked with the past and the future has its base in the present. Directionality here does not entail any supernatural connotation. It is not that some mysterious force over millions of years has been constantly engaged in pushing the micro-organisms in the direction where the *Homo sapiens*, the man, ultimately finds himself to be. Rather, when we look back we find a sort of directionality in the growing complexities and ever growing new species. Similar evidences are also available in the fields of social evolution particularly in the propagation of new communities and new ethnic groups. The tribal taboos are precursors to religious habits as tribal codes were forerunners to the modern concept of justice. Before the codes could be implemented and taboos adhered to there had to grow a minimal social organization. This developed out of the expanding population and fear of food growing scarce. Later the taboos and the rudimentary mores not only tied down some of the tribes to their life of fixed grooves, but also the rules and regulations branched out and new ethnic groups were formed. If a tribe came into contact with another group it acquired some of the habits and customs or acts which proved useful to it. The borrowed traits grew diffused as they were transplanted, and pushed the host culture a step further. In forming new groups both the principles of acceptance and rejection occur.

There are certain cultural traits which we find acting like universal spirits guiding the destiny of man through all ages and in all lands. The union of a man and woman must be recognized by the society and out of this fact has grown marital customs which differ not only among different nationalities but also in the constituent groups of one nationality. Incest is a widely recognized taboo for which no nationality can lay any specific claim. Inheritance of property either individually or community-wise is another universal cultural characteristic, and so on. These act as centrifugal forces bringing the members of a community closer together. Beyond the cultural *universals*

there are traits called *alternatives* or specialities providing opportunities for subgrouping inside the broad community. Eating cooked food, if reckoned as a universal trait, we seldom find two communities cooking food exactly in the same manner. In marriage the girl and the boy come to live together but hundreds of different patterns have grown out of this event universally observed.

We may take a few examples to show how some of the customs or trait-complexes, as anthropologists call these, have evolved, and stratification grown from broader to narrower patterns and how sometimes these were born out of admixture with other customs. Use of fire in *hoam* and *yagnya* are not purely Hindu customs. These have grown out of worshipping the sun the begetter of fire and heat so often mentioned in Vedic hymns. It existed in the Assyrian and Babylonian culture as well as in ancient Iran and India, and this culture is commonly known as heliolitic culture. The Brahman maintained fire in his house for daily sacrifice and this rite is still upheld among the Zoroastrians. Likewise, the Brahman's holy thread and the *kushti* worn by the Zoroastrians form a common culture trait showing amazing similarity in the established rituals in the daily cleansing of the thread. In the Vedic period, the thoughts and notions, the social institutions and mental outlook of the Aryans in India 'had many more things in common with the primitive Hellenes, Italians, Celts, Germans and Slavs than with their descendants the later Hindus of Northern India' (32). Fresh ideas and impressions from the host countries in course of time were assimilated by the Aryans. 'No trace of the doctrine of transmigration, for instance, is found in the Rig-veda, and yet no other doctrine is so peculiarly Indian. . . . Some of the cosmic notions seem to be Dravidian; Dravidian gods were being added to the Aryan pantheon' (*Ibid*). To take another example, magic as forerunner to religion has been widely studied. 'All the Indo-European races practised magic, and curiously enough the Lithuanian and Old Slavonic preserve words precisely equivalent to the use of *Kṛtyā* in Indian for magic' (17. 40). There is abounding evidence to show that in the ancient Peruvian and Maya civilization human sacrifice, *nara medha* as it was known in India, was prevalent in some form or another as in most of the



Indo-European cultures.\* Later this practice was changed to the sacrifice of cows, bullocks, buffaloes and goats. Sacrificial rites were once equally prevalent among the Assyrians and Babylonians, Romans and the Greek, and at least in Mesopotamia before the Goths arrived there human sacrifice was a common form of atoning sins and to please mother goddess Chaldû human and domestic animal sacrifices were offered. Sacrifice of buffaloes and goats continues among the Hindus whereas Moham-medans show preference for cows and goats. Again, animal sacrifice at many places has now given way to the sacrifice of innocent banana, sugar cane and gourd. To cite another example, it may come as a minor shock to the ardent Hindus that *Satyanarain Katha* which is commonly claimed as a Hindu worship has its origin in the Muslim religion. It is a story that was narrated by a *peer*, Satyapeer, which gradually came to be acclimatized in the Hindu fold. The *shirni* or *shinni* which is distributed among the devotees is a Muslim custom as are the ingredients used in this offering. The word itself, *shirini*, is of Persian origin.

Festivals also can offer facts of substantial value. The *Holi* festival, often designated as a distinctive Indian festival, actually came into existence in the post-Vedic period. 'Its province extends from the eastern provinces of India to Europe in the west' (34). This festival was prevalent in all the eastern European countries in one form or another. We do not find it practised in the same way all over India and this festival is more uncommon than common in the Dravidian regions barring the areas adjacent to the non-Dravidian regions.

Polyandry, that is the practice of one woman being shared by more than one husband was common in many countries in the past and continues to be practised in Malay Archipelago, in certain parts of East Africa as also among the Tibetans and other Mongoloid people. In Ceylon polyandry was suppressed by the sixties of the last century and in India, among the Nairs in the South, it was prevalent till recently and continues to be practised among the Todas and Kotas in the South. Matrilineal type of

\* 'There is, furthermore, not a single province in India where the inhabitants do not still point out to the traveller, places where their Rajahs used to offer up to their idols unfortunate prisoners captured in war' (33. 646).

family relationship, reckoning of descent through the mother, is still prevalent among the Nairs in the South, Khasis in Assam and several other communities.

Those who live in the one-world spirit may gain solace from the fact that the spirit of one world in matters of taboos and superstitious beliefs, totems and manifold forms of worship has continued to prevail from the ancient days. It would require a volume of the present size only to list the captions of magic and rituals prevalent in different parts of the globe and which are still now practised in India. For instance, taboos related to the menstruating females was not only prevalent everywhere at one time or another but such taboos continue to be maintained at many places, e.g. in Tahiti, Costa Rica, the African countries in general, among the American Indians, Maoris in Australia, Israelites, etc. The menstruating woman in rural India is considered unclean and therefore is not permitted to cook food for the family not only in the orthodox Hindu home but, also, among the tribal people in India though reasons offered may vary from place to place.

Totemism is yet another illustration. Totem 'is an organism, or a representation of an organism, that is venerated as its symbol, its protective deity, or its spirit kin by a particular social group, community, or defined community division'. Relationship growing between totem animals or plants and social groups is based on ancient beliefs and its practice is wide and varied. The totem animal is either worshipped and devotedly protected or its meat believed to possess sacred or magical properties is specifically consumed. That is how cow has come to be held as a venerated animal among the Hindus.\* In some of the Japanese islands the bear receives an idolatrous veneration and is held as *kamni* or god, and this practice is also prevalent in Kamatchatka. The Semites, the Egyptians and the Aryans equally practised totemism. Mohenjodaro civilization had accepted the Brahminic bull as the totem animal as it can be found in the seals of that period. Based on animal totemism social clans may be formed. The Bhils for instance are divided in 24 clans some of which are named after animals or plants.

\* This practice is not approved by the Zoroastrian religion, nevertheless it is a common sight in Bombay to find a Parsee, like a Hindu, touching the cow and touching his forehead with the same fingers.

'Many castes in Orissa—the Kurmi, the Mumhar, the Bhumia are named after serpent, pumpkin, jackal and other totems. The Katkharis in Bombay, the Goud tribes of M.P. or of Rajasthan also have clan names after the fauna and flora of their habitat. The Dehli kharia . . . of Chota Nagpur plateau are divided into eight totemic clans based on tortoise, deer, birds and plants (35). Snake cult is not peculiar to the Namboodripads in Kerala alone but is prevalent among the tribal peoples of Assam, Bihar and the Punjab.

Rice since Vedic days has been held in esteem as an object of offering and continues to be so treated; it is equated with mother goddess Luxmi in many parts of India. But then rice has been given similar place in social customs elsewhere; also in what the anthropologists call homeopathic magic. As Fraser says, 'If Europe has its Wheat-mother and its Barley-mother, America has its Maize-mother and the East-Indies their Rice-mother' (36).

Assimilation and dissemination are characteristic phenomena in cultural development in both its aspects, viz. habits of action which constitute customs and habits in thinking leading to collective ideas. Murdock, a noted anthropologist, has observed: 'The overwhelming majority of the elements in any culture are the results of borrowing' (37). Modern American culture provides a good illustration, as can be seen by a few random examples. 'Our language', he continues, 'comes from England, our alphabet from Phoenicians, our numerical system from India, and paper and printing from China. Our family organization and system of real property derive from medieval Europe. Our religion is a composite of elements largely assembled from ancient Hebrews, Egyptians, Babylonians and Persians . . .' (.254). It is doubtful whether there is a single culture known in history or anthropology that has not owed at least ninety per cent of its constituent elements to cultural borrowing. Would then culture be used as a safe criterion of nationality? Could culture be tagged as a label to any country in the world particularly when the maps continue to be re-drawn so frequently?

We may pause here for a while to answer a plausible question that could be raised, viz. why is it that no stress has been placed on the material aspects of culture? Is it not that the temples

at Konarak or the Qutub Minar like the great temple of Abu Simbel in Egypt or the hallowed pyramids tell untold stories of the time? They do, just as the physical anthropologists with the aid of a solitary tooth can construe the picture of the man or the ape who possessed that precious tooth. But the picture that is thus obtained is a static picture of the man or the society. It cannot tell what the man, who possessed the peculiar type of tooth, did to others of his kind, what the social relationship was like between the men who worshipped at the Konarak temple, whether *all* had free access to the inside of the temple. Answers to these questions alone could enable us to draw up in our imagination the dynamics in human relationship which is a matter of specific interest in this study.

To continue, while speaking of the cultural contributions of the Muslims there is a common temptation to point to the mosques and minarets built by the kings and emperors. It is not denied that the Taj Mahal represents an archaeological contribution of a certain emperor which is of immense architectural value but it has hardly anything to do with the cultural distinctions of the country at large; these specimens reveal little of social and human values to be correlated with the communities of people who then inhabited the country. Speaking of the Taj it appears that a beautiful queen in her death had provided an occasion for her extravagant lover to make a public exhibition of his amour, a lover who had unlimited wealth and uninhibited power over slaves to build a mausoleum at which the world was to look agape and assess his mighty love. The poet Nazrul Islam has bemoaned: 'you have witnessed the glory of the Taj but what do you know of the sighs and sobs of the slaves that went to build it?' The British have left behind quite a few landmarks in archaeological development in this country like the Victoria Memorial Hall at Calcutta and those grotesque specimens at New Delhi, the Secretariat buildings, but could these be construed to represent the Indian culture of the period, or did these contribute in any way to the building up of interrelationship among communities? Those gigantic monuments of the Hindu temples in Orissa and in the South were certainly not meant for the masses of the people. Such monuments almost invariably served the purpose of satisfying the needs, or whims,

of a select group of people, and cultural acquisition was an outcome which came by-the-way.

It is for this reason that it is found advisable here to lay emphasis on the social aspect of culture, such acts which regulate our lives. Culture here signifies not the products of material culture but psychological reflexions of a community, such acts which regulate our lives at every turn. Culture 'is one facet of human life . . . which is learned by people as the result of belonging to some particular group, and is that part of learned behaviour which is shared with others. It is our social legacy, as contrasted with our organic heredity. It is the main factor which permits us to live together in a society, giving us ready-made solutions to our problems, helping us to predict the behaviour of others, and permitting others to know what to expect of us' (38). Diversity in the cultural constancies is to be judged through the maintained social institutions like worship and marriage, ceremonies and festivals, by observing the social codes of behaviour like manners and morals; likewise, accepted laws of inheritance may give an indication of the cultural pattern, the common forms in art and music, rituals and social mores and these all go to constitute cultural heritage in which religious belief and language play parts of import. Against this background we may notice the distinction between the term 'cultural behaviour' as ways of living and 'cultured behaviour' which often stands for snobbery. Let us now examine the possible mechanism which may operate in the spread of a cultural trait.

III

Cultural ramification may take place against two broad forces, viz. growth in population and time, and this format is not quite different from the formula of the formation of species in biology.

There are two natural forces that appear to influence evolutionary growth in society—as different from revolutionary changes—and these appear to bear dialectic relationship. A group not only conforms to certain rules but also deviates from the path of conformation. Let it be remembered that no group can be completely homogeneous. A group consists of males and females, young and old, healthy and sick members, and all these differences inherently cause certain forces of dispersal. That is,

while adhering to the customs and collective ideas of the group, individual differences in action may become potential sources of differentiation within the group. To this may be added the fact that a custom or collective thought strictly speaking does not follow the principle of yes or no, more often the arrangement is bipolar. By way of illustrating the point it may be said that Brahmans in the past invariably spent some time in their daily worship—I say in the past because not all Brahmans follow this code today. Anyway, here a certain amount of latitude was permitted. One could have spent, say, six, four or two hours and this may not have made any difference. But there was nothing to enforce the time of six hours. This elasticity afforded an opportunity to increase or decrease the period of time in worshipping and thus introducing a range over which this custom could slowly change. But then these minute changes by virtue of cumulative effect in the course of time, in the course of centuries, may finally bring about a radical difference. In a community comprising of several families it cannot be expected that all would meticulously follow the standard laid down, and thereby a difference in the observance of the *norm* may ensue. The reason may also lie in the altered material conditions and of this we may witness today in the changed mode of lighting the premises in large towns on *deepavali* nights and compare it with the rural houses. But we need not amplify this point since the word *norm*, used in the context of observing social customs and manners, itself suggests a *median*, a standard which the members of the community are *expected* to follow but it is presumed that all may not do so for one reason or another.

Gradual deviation from the norm, if continued over generations, may give rise to more than one nodal point in the normative range. The best illustration that may be cited here lies in the realm of language. Not all the members in a family speak exactly alike and yet there is a normative coherence observed by all members in a community which fact may be observed when compared to another family of the same socio-cultural group. These groups in a district or town, again, may show slight difference in the manner of speaking and in the use of vocabulary compared to the adjacent district or town and this is the genesis of dialects. There may further grow distinctive differences which in course of time would give rise to a new lan-

guage as was the case with the Assamese, Bengali and Oriya languages. But then the Assamese language itself is developing fast; it is not only creating its own idioms and phrases, experimenting with prose and poetry but also shows internal changes of another sort. Within the next half a century we shall not be surprised to find two Assamese languages instead of one, viz. the upper Assamese and the lower Assamese languages.

It is true that a rather simplified picture has been attempted here. These are the general trends in the development of culture and there remain many other subsidiary problems. The above illustrations were intended to give an indication to the fact that it is not quite easy to decide the nationality on cultural basis. The separatist view of cultural studies that had prevailed until the dawn of the present century perhaps made it easy to demarcate the cultural map, but with the passage of time and with the shrinking of the world owing to the introduction of rapid means of transport, with the fast changing boundaries of the countries we find that in matters cultural there is a continuous stratification from larger *gestalts* or wholes to smaller sub-wholes. History did not prevent diffusion of culture. How far one culture was diffused with another, and in that process how much of the original identity is retained and how much is the result of assimilation which is determined by accessibility in contact and the prevalent mood of the people it is not easy to answer. It is not easy to demarcate that amalgam *A* typifies German culture (it was easy for Hitler) and therefore can be clearly distinguished from cultural amalgam *B*. This may be a chauvinistic way of demarcating cultural boundaries but finds little support from scientific evidence. Man since its hoary past has tried to communicate with his fellow-men though the process was extremely slow in the beginning. Nevertheless, learning from others, imbibing and assimilating a little and yet maintaining an identity have been the mainsprings of action in social evolution. But this identity of a group cannot statically remain sharply outlined and silhouetted unless it has preferred to live in a moribund state like the members of the Onge tribe in the Andamans. Some of these tribes are still in the primitive state and are living samples of man as he may have existed tens of thousands of years ago. Speaking of the blends in Indian culture Kroeber, an authority in social anthropology, has observed:

'All cultures are composite in the origin of their content and multiply so. What a term like "blend" really can mean definitely is that most of the content of a given culture has entered it so recently or massively from other cultures that it can be explicitly referred to these with assurance. In short, blended cultures are essentially derivative cultures. That is something which Indian civilization is not. It has given much more than it has borrowed (except perhaps for its last thousand years of conquest-subjection to Islam)' (39). India has given more than it has borrowed. Indian culture has left its contributions over a region extending from Bali to Baluchistan. It is also this fact which prevents us from accepting Indian culture as a unitary criterion for determining Indian nationality.

Using the broad unit of culture to be designated as Indian culture, that is to say a cultural pattern which may characterize the people of India alone and distinguish them from others, is not feasible. This way we are not left free to distinguish the Indian from, say, the Pakistanis, Nepalese, or the Sinhalese. On the basis of religion, language, myths, folklores and social habits a Nepalese national is not easily distinguishable from an Indian, just as it would be difficult to distinguish a Ceylonese from Indian. It may then be said that Indian culture in these countries prevails in the same manner as a few traits of 'western' culture have found admission in the Indian society. But the main problem which was raised earlier in this chapter remains unsolved. The object of our inquiry was to distinguish a cultural pattern which could be isolated and labelled as Indian and this we find impracticable. We may distinguish an Indian from a Pakistani from the political standpoint of nationality but to insist upon a distinction on cultural basis could be made on any other ground but rational.

Evaluating with the different attributes of nationality, viz. religion, language, history and culture, we find no justifiable arguments to uphold the view that the people of India belong to one homogeneous nationality. For the same reasons the country could not be said to contain people of multiple nationalities. It would be more appropriate to designate the different culture clusters as ethnic groups. 'The ethnic group may be a nation, a people (such as the Jews), a language group (the Dakota Indians), a sociologically defined so-called race (the American



Negro), or a group bound together in a coherent cultural entity by a religion (the Amish).’ By ethnic group we would henceforth understand members residing within a geographically determined territory and bearing close resemblance among themselves in the socio-cultural sphere by virtue of which they could be distinguished from the groups in the adjacent territories when all the territories are bound together by a common government.

This problem can only be solved if we take into consideration the geographical territory inhabited by the people and the common government they have, and then an Indian could be distinguished from a Nepalee or a Sinhalese. In other words accepting the nationality of a person using socio-cultural criteria cannot be supported or approved. Eventually we have to fall back on the more objective criterion of common government and territory discussed earlier in this chapter. A plausible operational definition of an Indian perhaps then would be: *an Indian is a person who is governed by the laws laid down by the Indian Constitution*. This way the definition may be left bereft of the sentimental value attached to the word nationality nevertheless would gain in its reliability by reducing ambiguity. The Constitution of India which came into operation in 1949 has steered clear of the word national and has introduced instead a term which is not only precise but embodies a much greater force; that term is *citizenship* which is different from nationality in more than one way.

During the British rule the Indian was a national of Great Britain and this way he could be distinguished from, say, the Egyptian or the German. But the Indians were not citizens of Great Britain. By being a member of a constituted state the individual member attains certain rights and is called upon to fulfil certain obligations only with reference to another territory or state. Such rights accrue as a result of state membership. Nevertheless such members may not possess equal rights within the state. It is this fact which distinguishes a citizen from a national. A citizen possesses certain civil rights which a mere national may not. Therefore, a national may be a citizen whereas it is not that all the nationals may necessarily be citizens. Jews in Hitler’s Germany enjoyed (or did they?) German nationality but were debarred from citizenship. The Philippines before their freedom were not American citizens though

they belonged to the American nation and owed allegiance to the U.S.A. Likewise, the Indonesians were Dutch subjects though not Dutch citizens. Constitutionally all Indian subjects not only belong to the Indian nationality (used as a politico-legal term) but are also citizens with well specified rights to claim. In such a case nationality in the political sense is used in the international context and takes no responsibility of proving socio-cultural status of the member, and it need not.

## *Chapter 5*

### *GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY • FEELING*

LIVING ORGANISMS habitually eschew solitary life, more so does man. Gregarious spirit is one of the primordial characteristics of the living organism and this it expresses in manifold ways. No animal will willingly accept loneliness for long. In rather mysterious ways solitary life affects even the biological state of the organism. Gorillas do not survive in isolation, rhinoceros stop breeding, birds reared in a cage when set free are often killed by their own species. Social psychology of the animals is a fascinating subject, more fascinating still is social psychology of the man. Solitary confinement was an abominable method used in punishing political prisoners during the British regime leading to many instances of insanity and self-destruction. Less painful in effect but agonizing all the same is social ostracism practised in the rural areas in India: the victim readily pays fines and dues imposed on him to atone his sins of omission and commission. The child expelled from his favourite gang will go to any length to regain his belongingness: Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn are immortal illustrations.

This feeling of belongingness, essentially a psychological phenomenon, is a subjective way of reacting towards others in the environment as it entails identifying oneself with the group. Each individual in a group is a unit whereas the community is the whole, and there may be still larger wholes in the group as also smaller sub-wholes and each man must find a place in one of these innumerable groups. Individuals no doubt differ in almost every respect, if carefully observed, and yet there is a discernible link working somewhere and in some way which distinguishes one community from another. Living together is not merely a biologically determined process, psychologically it

produces profound effects on the man's mental make-up. It is here that he is changed from a mass of flesh and bones into a man. His will to act in manifold ways, his sublime feelings, the yearnings and desires, all these are the products of living together. It is while living in the midst of others that his likes and dislikes begin to bear directionality, his attitudes begin to prevail upon him and he develops an outlook which he proudly calls his own but more often it is the reflection of the omnipotent group force. The idea as to how he should look upon others as well as how he should countenance the attitude of others towards him germinates and thrives in the social life of man.

The feeling of belongingness acts in a bi-way process; it is the sum total of one's attitudes towards others in the group and vice versa and it has its own ways of developing. The course of one's attitudinal feelings begin to set in the course of the child's early life. The compliant mind is very much like a radar waiting and watching to record the stimuli coming from outside, with the difference that the child is not merely a responsive mechanism but, also, stores the mental experience in the shape of imagery. Adults surrounding the child, or for that matter anyone older than the child can evoke suggestions in the child. To start with, it is mostly from the parents that the child imbibes the patterns of his reactions to the external world and in this way the attitudes of the child begin to take shape right at the infancy and early childhood; the sum total of these reaction patterns is gradually moulded and hardened here and there and the process continues till the parents' contact is available.

The primary group, constituting the persons in the immediate vicinity of the child and in which the child is reared, bears potent influence on the building up of child's attitudes; as a matter of fact it is more impressive than all other social forces put together. 'Parents are the immediate educational devices of society.' However this impact is not always clearly discernible, it is difficult to spot out where actually it originates though it is called the educative process. Education in common parlance means formal education imparted in institutions. But let it be borne in mind that out of twenty-four hours the child has the minimum contact with the teachers at school, he spends about three-fourths of the day in the company of others outside the school and here too he is in closer contact with his parents

and other members of the primary group. Since the contact outside the school influences the child's mode of thinking and acting, what grows of this contact is included under the head educative process. The total impression generated in the child's mind in the course of social intercourse is generated mostly by the members of this group during the early phase of the child's development, from the members in the immediate environment. Since these members help the child to gather experience in various ways in everyday living this process may be called informal education; it is more subtle but more effective. If questioned, the parents may fail to recall having given any definite instructions with regard to the kneading of the child's attitudes but it is through the medium of everyday piecemeal behaviour under specific situations that the parents contribute their share in moulding the child's mind and giving an integrated shape to the child's attitudes towards society. In this respect suggestive forces emanating from the parents considerably affect the child's future reactions. But the word suggestive should be made clear.

In our everyday life we not only react according to our own views but also as advised by others. Now, advice may come in different forms; one is when we are conscious and aware of the views emanating from an outside agency or another person. The image of such an advice we hold in our mind by the side of our own and then we try to judge for ourselves which one to accept; here we are aware of the entity of two ideas which may or may not be different. This is the common meaning of the word suggestion. This word can also be used to signify a view or an idea which had its origin outside the person which however he tends to hold as his own. It is a kind of an unconscious infiltration in one's mind of a belief or impulse originating outside him while the process of ingraining remains unknown to him. It is very often that we pose certain ideas and beliefs as our very own when actually these have been accepted from others by way of suggestive mechanism. The widely held beliefs, like the belief that the earth is round, started purely as a suggestive force since barring a few astronauts nobody has seen the earth from a distance to reckon its shape and few indeed have undertaken to analyze the astronomical data. Yet when it is said, 'I believe that the earth is round' it merely signifies that I believe what others believe. Learning, whether it is formal or

informal, is heavily indebted to the forces of suggestion, and in the absence of this tool teaching would become irksome and laborious. In the learning-teaching process it is widely accepted that the learner should have a minimum of faith on the teacher without which teaching loses its effectiveness. At the same time it becomes rather difficult for a person, to successfully use this mechanism unless he were held in a minimal esteem in the eyes of the person he would like to suggest. It is for this reason that parents, elder brothers and sisters can make use of their position successfully for suggestivity whereas the younger brother usually cannot; the latter might succeed, provided he happened to be bright and clever compared to his elder brother and which fact is accepted by the elder brother.

The political views that one often parades as his own and which he holds in the absence of systematically gained knowledge in politics or economics or without taking active part in politics, one's opinion on arts and aesthetics held under similar conditions, and these all what a man calls his own view are substantially built on the views of others. We share in other's views though not many are aware of this sharing process and this provides an excellent opportunity to propel one's views in others; the mass media in this respect are fruitful means of communication for implanting an idea. Advertising is a case in point. It would lead to dismay if someone tried to find out how many persons using toothpaste *A* have actually analyzed it chemically and in other ways to determine its alleged superiority over toothpaste *B* before declaring *A* as superior to *B*. More often it proves to be a belief, which may not have any objective basis, and which is accepted on the suggestions made by the advertisements leading the user of the commodity to presume with a tinge of vanity that his acceptance of the goods is backed by his own thinking and reasoning. Another peculiarity of the suggestive force is that its effect on an individual is quick to take effect if the idea has taken roots in a large number of people. If *X* is in communication with ten persons who hold a certain belief, that is, if they have accepted the idea in the absence of sufficient proof, and if the number of acquaintances grows to a hundred people adhering to the same belief, then *X*'s suggestibility will considerably increase in strength. It is for this reason that once an idea has gained acceptance, provided it does not face a serious

challenge, continues to grow in strength with time. In other words, an idea, when accepted by more and more people not only expands horizontally, but also grows in depth in the minds of the persons. Again, an idea as it grows horizontally also gains in momentum in communication, the more it is known the more rapidly it is communicated to others and this depends on simple mathematical reasoning.

Suggested ideas take time to be ingrained in the mind but once they find place in the mind it is very likely that they will be integrated into a stable pattern of belief as part of the mind. Though man may boast of being a rational animal rarely he reasons. However, it is to be admitted that belief, as different from knowing through personal experience of one kind or another, is an economical mental process; life would grow tedious indeed if at every step we had to reason and decide for ourselves.

The mechanism that works behind the transmission of a belief is no less interesting. Oral communication is not only the commonest and most effective means but is also the oldest. In the ancient days when there was neither paper nor papyrus vocal transmission of human thought was the only course left open. Later, the written form and the medium of press proved more efficacious particularly from the quantitative point of view. But all these in a way are tangible means of communication; whereas communication can also be sub-vocal or even intangible. Gesture language, nodding the head to signify yes or no is a sub-vocal method. It is not necessary that one's voice must be audible to transmit a message carrying his views. Silence itself can be eloquent and a person may express rudeness through words as through silence. A youngster at home comes to learn quickly whether to approach his father for a new football or to keep at a safe distance from him. Views on a subject can be conveyed in more than one way and we come to learn how to interpret a message.

Another point of interest is that suggestive value is enhanced by dearth of experience. When a person is advised to act in a particular way or adopt a certain attitude he may do it more readily when he has no experience of his own against which comparison could be made. It is mainly for this reason that young children and the simple hearted village folk prove more

gullible. But then gullibility or heavy suggestivity is not the monopoly of the unsophisticated villager alone.

In acquiring an attitude however the child does not acquire the parental attitude *in toto* or else there would be little difference between the parents and their offspring and yet the children in a particular family do bear what we call family stamp, and does not fail to carry certain features in attitude prevalent in the family. It is precisely here that we feel the need for an explanation regarding the initiation, the genesis of attitude formation.

A growing infant cannot be compared to a plant growing in the rains in the nook of a window-sill and it certainly does not behave like a fully wound clock-spring releasing its stilled force. The infant with its biological inheritance grows in a definite social field and the forces in the immediate environmental field are provided by the parents, nurses and those who are responsible for the infant's material well-being. This immediate environment considerably helps in giving shape to the direction of the growth. We know little as to how a child might grow if it were left all to itself without any interference whatsoever. There are possibilities of its picking up the habits and manners of those who fed it. This is what we gather from the cases of the so-called wolf children. The parents together with the members of the household therefore constitute the first community that the child comes across and the young child is geared to the forces emanating from the parental community partly identifying itself with this community and partly maintaining its own independent momentum of growth potentialities. He would have inevitably grown in one way or another if he were reared in isolation but in the midst of others the specific directionality in his attitudes is provided by the parental community.

Soon the child meets other kinsmen, consanguinous or otherwise. The latter may constitute a community of their own by virtue of the fact that the members of this group may exhibit differing personality patterns and yet continue to maintain a homogeneity, say, in matters of religious faith and beliefs, in the observance of certain social codes and customs. Since these kinsmen do not live together with the parents of the child they possess certain distinguishing features, and yet these persons together with the parents may forge an orbit of their own main-



taining certain clearly discernible distinctions from other groups like the neighbours who are not related to the child in any way, or distant relatives maintaining little contact. Each of the individual participants in this group though keeps his identity contributes nevertheless his share in upholding the bonds that tie together the community as a whole. This is the characteristic feature of every clan endeavouring to maintain an air of distinction, no doubt tinged with a hue of superiority, each group having its personality, no matter whether the clan is of head-hunting Nagas or members of the Marlborough family.

We may try to visualize the child as a point at the centre of a circle and the latter representing parents or other members of the household (parental community). This circle is lodged within another circle of larger diameter standing for frequent visitors to the family (kindred community), and another circle beyond it to represent the neighbours (neighbour community), and so on. There may be further circles composed of the district, state, region of the country, and Bhārat comes last on the list. However, each subsequent circle after the parental circle stands for a specific community with some influence or more on the child, but the force of the circle weakens as it grows larger and larger, though the individual can always identify himself with one circle or more.

Relationship between the child and the *kindred community* does not differ fundamentally from its relationship with the *parental community* already formed; the difference lies in degree. Its reactions to the stimuli afforded by the parents are quicker and prone to suffer fewer inhibitions when compared to its reacting to the members of the kindred community, or others. Physical and social contact may be attributed as one of the reasons for this difference but is not the only reason. Since the child does not spend as much time with the members of the larger group as with the more compact group he has fewer opportunities to be suggested. For obvious reasons the author here is avoiding to enter into details entailed in this relationship and is only trying to build up a workable hypothesis. The growing relationship between the child and others is neither too simple or quite stereotyped. For instance, even fewer contacts may provide a more powerful stimulus under certain circum-

stances, nor geographical contact is essential for identification but then a detailed analysis should better be avoided here.

We may now look for those factors which determine the trends in one's habitual likes and dislikes, the inurements and conventions. There are of course certain reactions which are biologically determined and may be expected from any child in any part of the world. Extreme temperature or bitter taste, pungent smell or electric shock are such extraneous stimuli causing damage to the organism and which would invariably produce disagreeable reactions of repulsion. Likewise there are other stimuli towards which he is naturally drawn. These are the cases of likes and dislikes which arise in the biogenic field.

But reactions may also arise in the psychogenic field which cannot be put at par with the situations mentioned above. Likes and dislikes arising in culinary or sartorial matters are purely psychogenic in the sense that any edible substance could be included in the daily diet of a person provided he had grown accustomed to consume it with the approval of his community and from his early childhood. However to say that habit is at the root of consumption of a particular type of food is not enough, it fails to explain the social and other related conditions. Rice-eating habit among the people in the coastal regions of India is intimately connected with the easy availability of paddy in the region which normally records heavy rainfall and thus it is easier to procure. It is for the same reason that plantains form the staple food in many African countries. Availability of the main ingredients in daily diet plus its mode of cooking form a pattern in the food habit which distinguishes a person from those of other regions.

The food may mostly consist of boiled or fried food or a combination of both. Again, in frying one may use oil—there are about half a dozen of different types of oils employed for this purpose. Eating raw vegetables may or may not be a part of the food habit in addition to fruits. Use of sugar and salt or other ingredients to bring about tastes of sour, bitter or pungent make all the difference. Again, using the same ingredients and vegetables or non-vegetarian food materials the mode of cooking may bring about the difference. In certain parts of India milk is hardly used in everyday life and its consumption signifies illness whereas in other parts milk and food containing milk or

milk products form an essential part of diet for each individual no matter how poor he may be. The main article for subsistence may be rice, wheat, barley, etc. or their combination. The kind of grains used and the mode of cooking is seldom the same in two parts of the country. It is not the cooking alone which is all-important but also the mode of eating and the allied rituals. It is through the medium of food and its fare that Bengalis come to be equated with fish, 'Madrassi' is recognized through the medium of 'rasam' (or vice versa), Maharashtrians consider the rest of the Indian people devourers of 'greasy stuff' and nobody considers anybody better than himself, and this is understandable. After all, at the centre of the concentric circles there rests that dot 'I-and-My'.

Feeding habit is a tiny fragment of the total social *milieu*. There are a couple of dozens of such agencies which aid in the adoption of social habits like habitat and type of abode, formal language and the local dialect, social rituals and festivals, music and arts, ethical codes and social manners, sports and political ideologies, hobbies and professional interest, and so on. Quasi-religious social ceremonies observed in the village, Thana, district or state or even a wider region form another example. Then there are regular pooja ceremonies receiving special emphasis in different states and regions. Lord Ganesh tops the list in Maharashtra, Krishna in Gujarat and Tamilnad, whereas these deities hold minor position compared to Durga or Kali in Bengal, in the U.P. Shri Ram and his Hanuman stand supreme. The Janmastami ceremony as it is observed in the U.P. or Rajasthan make it quite difficult to decide whether it should be listed under religious or social festival. Durga pooja in Bengal is fast changing into a minor religious occasion providing with a major opportunity for social get-together. Differences can be noticed even in the observance in 'political days'. Shivaji *utsav* is pre-eminently Maharashtri festival whereas Subhas Day is Bengal's favourite. For some years following the last news of Subhas Bose his birthday used to be observed in a quasi-religious manner; women fasted till noon, when Bose was born, and then blowing of conch shells heralded the hour for breaking fast. The list could be drawn infinitely longer at the cost of proving irksome. It is by conforming to the norm that we gain entrance in the respective social circle and feel the belongingness. The word norm used

here requires a little clarification, since it is one of those words which contain too much in too little.

By norm we mean an objective in standard to be attained. This of course sounds quite simple though it may leave some gaps in our understanding if it is remembered that no two persons can act exactly in the same manner. It is rather difficult to explain what we mean by standard language or the standard way of observing a ceremony. The term standard conditions when used in physical science considerably limits our imagination but in social science it is not quite easy to delineate an action pattern. We may take help of an illustration. Suppose there are ten possible ways of reacting to a situation and each differs from the other in degree. These reactions then can be ranged in a line beginning with the 'least' and ending with the 'most'. Further, suppose there arises a hundred occasions for these reactions to be evinced, any of the ten modes each time, allowing it freedom to occur in its own way. If these hundred reactions were now closely observed we would see a peculiar arrangement. No doubt there would be some extreme cases in the nature of the 'most' and 'least' but a majority of the cases would fall in between the extremes. When one dresses up for the office one does not don striped trousers nor does one go in crumpled pyjamas, though he may possess both in wardrobe, yet he may not go to the office exactly in the same dress all the year round. In large towns one has the opportunity to eat food from different states and whoever can afford does eat food to which he is not accustomed, nevertheless it is often that he eats food commonly eaten in a particular state even though he does not eat the same food on two successive days. This maximal repetition of a behaviour when diverse ways remain open is considered as the norm. What exactly should be called maximal pattern may not be easy to delineate. It is for this reason that a norm may be viewed as a changeable entity, it may undergo a transformation in time and vary according to the place where it is adopted; this however has been discussed by us on an earlier occasion. We may now go back to the main topic.

Human relationship as explained above may have appeared to be restricted to one plane—parental community, kindred community, etc., but this would not be an accurate picture; actually the human relationship is of multidimensional nature. The

plan of affinity as sketched earlier, showing the link of kinship, does not exhaust the pattern. Within the society men are grouped together under several other labels, as a matter of fact infinite varieties of akinness are possible. There are many more circles besides the concentric circles already described and these may lie in different planes. One of these may represent political ideology of the members or their party affiliation, another circle may represent professional or vocational interest which brings the people in a particular profession closer together. Yet another may represent religious faith, whereas a sect, caste, sub-caste, school tie and club membership may form other groups. Fashion thrives in this simple psychology, and the traders in attire, garments and cosmetics take full advantage of it. In the past people spent lavishly and sometimes behaved ludicrously in order just to be members of the fraternity of Rai Sahibs and Rai Bahadurs. The disciples of a guru forge a chain of their own and feel a closer proximity to each other compared to their friends and cousins who are not disciples of the guru. There are psychological circles of dog lovers and dog haters and we find quite a few marriages in the western countries ending on the rocks on this canine issue. There can be an infinite number of circles to which each man is chained. These are inescapable fetters, shackles from which no man has been known to be free and from which no man wants to be free.

It is fascinating to watch the interrelationship of these interminable circles and chains. A person apparently may, and does, belong to more than one group. A Hindu or a Parsi on a certain occasion may feel closer to another Hindu or Parsi. It is possible that he may have grown sophisticated to admit this fact in the open but the simplest test is to slight his community and pretty soon he may be seen vigorously defending his community, and his vehemence may also give out the intensity of feeling with which he may feel bound to another Hindu or Parsi. Anyway, as an ardent philatelist he will certainly be more at home with another philatelist when compared to a coin collector. This is the main cause of the growth of innumerable associations. As a physician he may feel nearer to his distant cousin, who also is a physician, than to his own brother who may be a believer in Ayurveda even though there may not be any specific reason to dislike his brother. This is how two per-

sons speaking the same language or hailing from the same town quickly come closer together in the train. Looking this way the three-dimensional concept in space could be extended to multidimensions in human relationship. A person may perforce belong to his kindred community but may accept the national community of another *nationality* by virtue of his accepting citizenship of the latter community. He may identify himself with his neighbours in matters of religious belief but may be the only member in the neighbourhood in respect of his keen interest in sports or a specific hobby. Man is wonderful indeed in his acrobatics in maintaining balance and poise, harmony and unity in the face of possible multidimensional disparity. But the apple cart is sometimes upset.

What has been said in the above does not mean that the pull in all the chains may be similar or the same. Valency, if the term could be used in the present context, is difficult in the different kinds of chain. Religion may exert greater force than culture, and this, again, may generate lesser force compared to that of language and literature. Nonetheless these are specimens of certain forces, social forces may be, and show a certain amount of resemblance with the physical force, though the exact nature of social force is not clearly understood. However, it is a fact that the group increases in its cohesiveness when it is faced with a situation of threat. All living organisms evince in this respect a similar response. We may notice this feature even among animals, and we know what follows on casting a stone at hornets' nest. Members in a community tend to come closer together when the group may sense danger of its dissolution. The circle then contracts so to say. It is of course difficult to judge whether the danger is real or imaginary. In the Muslim period the Hindu subjects had genuine reasons to fear the extinction of their religion and this may have brought them closer together; possibly, this may have generated additional forces of religious conservatism and orthodoxy. To raise a cry now of HINDUISM IN DANGER, when our Constitution guarantees freedom of religious practice would be based on factors imaginary rather than real.

As Renan has reminded us, 'common experiences lead to the formation of a community of will. More than anything else it is common grief that binds a nation together.' Mark Antony

made subtle use of this elementary psychology when he played the orator:

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;  
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,  
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.

And the audience was readily inflamed. It is this human bond under threat that gives strength to the slogan: WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE, even though the workers may belong to hundreds of different groups. It was through making ample use of this psychological mechanism that Hitler and Mussolini had risen to power, and under the banner of Islam-in-danger the Muslim League was catapulted into the slip-stream of political activity. This psychology is still played upon by the political parties in one form or another, the pitch reaching its height during the days of elections.

We may pause to ponder over the psychological mechanism that is brought into play under threat. Why do the members constituting the group appear to come closer to each other? What is it that one has to fear about when his community is adversely criticized for one reason or another? Is it a purely imaginary construction or may there be some down-to-earth justification? Actually it is a mixture of both. There is little doubt that certain types of fear are more imaginary than real but not all the threat situations may thus be treated, and of this we have spoken earlier.

Men form a chain in human relationship. But this simple statement contains more than what is evident. As a constituent link in the chain he does not actually regard himself at par with others, nor does he accept complete parity in status. This kind of objective equality is almost a biological improbability. In fact, each individual looks upon himself as the centre of a circle. Each man always holds himself and will continue to hold himself as a pivot of the circle. In my group I certainly am the significant member, the vital point, and the group without me would mean little to me; man's ego is supreme. Each man considers himself a link in the chain, but an important link. Under a situation of threat directed against the community as a whole the individual psychologically transfers the threat upon

himself. It is a process of expansion of one's ego and in this imaginative process the differences are overlooked, similarities are exaggerated. It is in this manner that in Hindu literature Radha is described as realizing Krishna as a part of herself, as Hanuman felt Rama within himself, just as the mother feels the infant continuing to be a part of herself. Provided this identification is there any threat against the group to which *I* belong is bound to permeate into *myself*. This transfer process can be noticed taking place in different forms and under different provocative circumstances. Here we may look into two illustrations.

Psychologically it is interesting to notice that the threat against one's existence, if too severe, the group instead of consolidating itself begins to dissolve into small and smaller groups. At the outbreak of the last famine in Bengal, when three million persons died of starvation, people living in the neighbourhood of Calcutta flooded to the town in search of food. Members of villages formed groups and went out together, each group consisting of the residents of a particular village and they begged for rice. With the intensification of the famine conditions and with the increasing scarcity of rice the village unit was broken up into sub-units of joint family, and they begged for rice water, as they realized the futility of asking for rice. Still later they roamed vacantly in search of a little gruel, in smaller groups—parents and their children. At the final stage when death was to be the inevitable end, each man and woman died in isolation from the rest. When milk was distributed for the consumption of the famished child, the mother with her stunned and dazed look pushed aside the approaching child and herself gulped down the milk. At the centre of each circle stands *I*.

To take another case: during the days of holocaust in the late forties innumerable social organizations had sprung up all over the country particularly in North India with the object of extending aid to the incoming refugees in their trek out of their former homeland. A threat against the Hindus in Pakistan was transfused as a threat against the Hindus in India (as the reverse was no doubt the case in Pakistan), with the result that signs of solidarity and fraternity were visible in abundance and in every direction. Never since the days of Shivaji, Hindus all over India had been transformed into such ardent Hindus. Analyzing



the situation we find that the threat no doubt was real, but only to *some*, to those who were actually affected; to the rest it was imaginary, but they felt *as if* it were their own plight. We may recall the occurrence of similar situations in the past as it happened following the Jalianwalla Bagh massacre and other similar widespread political calamities.

Partition of Bengal announced in 1905 was of a different character in the sense that not a few but *all* were affected; anyone who may have held himself as Bengali was psychologically involved. In the political movement that followed to annul the partition, language-cum-culture rose above religion and prominent Muslims joined the political struggle along with the Hindus. Interestingly, the mode of expressing the state-wise wrath bore unconcealed religious tinge. The tying of *rakhi* thread 'was to symbolise the brotherly unity of the Bengali people which nobody can tear asunder'. Perhaps this was to be.

As there may exist justifiable reasons for experiencing akinness there may also grow strong grounds for tearing asunder. We may follow up the case illustrated above. As the Hindu Punjabi trekked through history and reached the Indian soil he was offered affectionate treatment which would have touched anyone's heart. All that could be done by the 'hosts' was done on grounds of humanity and national feeling. But these people had come to stay and could not live as guests for ever, they had to look after themselves. As we know the Punjabis by nature are sturdy and hardy people and therefore refused to stand in awe before the adverse circumstances they were forced into. Facing boldly the realities they struggled and worked hard to rehabilitate themselves and to regain a foothold in the social arena. It is quite possible that there may have been a black sheep in the flock but by and large they soon proved themselves superior to the 'hosts'. With the clashes in interest growing it did not take long for the host-attitude to take a different turn, at times ugly. In other words, the large mass of *Indian* nationality that was, based on culture, religion, language, etc., now stood divided into smaller units of 'outsiders' and 'insiders'. This was bound to be so since there were in existence other circles among the 'insiders' which now felt the threat of competition.

One question that remains to be answered is: are our attitudes necessarily an outcome of our personal experience and do

they spring from realities in life? Are attitudes related to the experiential data or may there be indirect causative factors? Personal experience does count but is not essential in attitude formation. The present author had an opportunity to undertake a minor investigation on the subject which unfortunately could not be completed. The object was to examine the dormant causative factors which were responsible in bringing about persisting dichotomy between two communities (let us denote these by *A* and *B*) which had reached a climax in the late forties. A few persons belonging to community *A* were selected for questioning, they were all college or university students and were positively antagonistic to community *B*. The latter were interviewed by the trusted students of the author belonging to community *A*. One of the questions to be answered was: 'What specific experience have you had in your life to dislike the *B* community?' It was amazing to find that out of the two dozen answers collected not one contained a specific charge: the answers invariably were vague and untenable, and it appeared that the interviewees would have felt relaxed to say 'none' which somehow they could not do. It was further revealed that their impressions were gathered from parents, teachers, friends, other relatives and so on. There was hardly anything new in these data, since it is the belief and conviction which count in these matters rather than actual experience. One may have had his impressions gathered from more than one source, viz., through relatives and which may have grown from the experience and/or belief of other members of the community (provided these people were superior enough to evoke suggestive influence). Literature is another route as also are other sources of mass media like broadcasts, film, press and platform, etc., and these are the ingredients—resources in human communication—which are the main sources of attitude formation.

Taking a detached view one cannot but feel amused at the fondness one shows towards his own belief. What is a matter of faith and belief we are not eager to test on the anvil of factual evidence and arguments and this is deferred if not despised. It is in this perspective that it has to be stoically admitted that man's faith in many respects has lagged far behind his material achievements. No one in his senses would like to make use of his gun

without first testing it, but in matters of faith and conviction we like to see our belief maturing undisturbed, like cheese.

Finally, we may mention the role of emotions and feelings in attitude formation. It is true that man's intellect has raised him to the supreme position in the animal world though it will not be true to hold that man alone possesses intelligence. Using scientific criteria, other animals besides man also have proved to possess intelligence, but no other being has made such full use of his intellectual capabilities as has been achieved by the civilized man. It is not that the civilized man's brain is self-distinguished from, say, that of a bushman. Distinction lies in the realm of ideation, imagination and feeling, more particularly in the phenomenon mentioned last. Feeling may be described as the subterraneous flow of emotive states, while the true emotive state is used to designate a group of mental phenomena distinguished by abrupt discharge of emotional energy in order to subside tension. We use the expressions 'feeling of humour' and 'emotions of anger'. Even though human feelings have socially evolved from raw emotions they show little commonality when put to pragmatic tests. At the base of all creative activity there is the inherent dynamic current of feelings, emotion represents the explosive state of the mind. A short-lived explosion can destroy but cannot create. It may be questioned as to what part intellect then may play? Man's quantum of intelligence determines how much may be expected of him in matters intellectual, his feelings and emotive states decide whether he would at all make use of his native intellectual capacity. A da Vinci or Newton may be said to have possessed both the psychological requirements of an exceptionally high order, but no man is bereft of these. However, feelings possess sustaining values which make them permanent or quasi-permanent.

It is the feeling aspect which counts in attitude formation; knowledge based on reasoning and understanding play subsidiary roles. As a matter of fact feeling may arise before knowing. Men of two distinctly different social communities, using the word community in any preferable sense, when meet for the first time do not start with a clean mental slate; more often it is with an amount of embarrassment and hesitation, if not with a sense of hostility, that they approach each other and there is a definite tinge of liking or disliking tendency on the part of each.

Actually it is this feeling tone which is responsible for binding the members in each group or community—we speak of the feeling of akinness, not of knowledge of akinness. It is because of the feeling, which is purely a subjective phenomenon, that social proximity may be experienced even in the absence of geographical proximity. An Indian inhabitant of Alaska or Argentina remains nearer to the Indian at home and this proximity is greater than the proximity between an Indian and the neighbour of the next international door. It is also due to this feeling tone, which is a predominant factor in the community sense, that we experience its waxing and waning in the group sense with alterations in feeling. That mere knowledge of certain facts is of limited use in building up of human relationship can be demonstrated in this way. Knowledge is gained through the intellectual capacity which does not change in a person, the feelings do. The quantum of intelligence that a person possesses is not changeable. In other words man's knowledge of another person or community remains constant whereas his attitudes may change. Apparently then, knowing of the person does not help much unless requisite changes are introduced in the sphere of feeling. Actually our attitudes change with the changes in our feelings and emotions, likes and dislikes, desires and yearnings. This fact should be borne in mind while seeking for the reasons of the feeling of Indian-ness which shall be described in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6

### GENESIS OF THE 'INDIAN'

LOOKING CASUALLY we may fail to notice the intrinsic relationship existing between psychology on the one hand and history on the other; traditionally we tend to treat academical subjects as isolated units in the sphere of learning. An average student of history pursuing degree course and with little acquaintance with psychology may come to regard psychology as an overflow from metaphysical pale plus plenty of sex and a lot of gibberish. His counterpart in psychology likewise may perforce consider history as a rubble heap of dates and monarchs' genealogy below which lies safely buried a discipline called history. Yet, the approach in these two disciplines bears many more similarities than meet the eye. The primary question behind the investigations in modern psychology is: if man *behaves* thus, why does he? Whereas, a historian inquires: if man *behaved* thus, why did he? The difference as we may see lies in the temporal dimension. It is not that the psychologist is not interested in the past, as a matter of fact it is incumbent upon him to gain acquaintance with the antecedent conditions of the event before he takes a closer look at the existing state, but it would be correct to say that his emphasis is on the present state. In fact he would miss considerably if he failed to take a thorough and comprehensive view of the event. If a man behaved thus . . . emphasis here is equidistributed on all the three principal words. That is why he wants to learn all the possible aspects about him—the biological man, and thus his interest is aroused in man's organic aspects. A study of the latter would enable us to understand man's behaviour which is like the gateways to the mind, though inside the gates one has to tramp a good deal. It is

when it comes to explaining the *thus* part of it that he finds his fellow traveller, the historian engaged in the same pursuit with the difference that he frowns and strains his eyes for distant vision. In a way they are comrades in pen though they may not have realized the fact; if they did they could share each other's tools.

To take an example, a historian would go a long way to dig out facts in order to find when and under what conditions the word 'people' was first used. We are told that following the French Revolution, Comte de Mirabeau, one of the prominent figures of the Revolution, proposed that the newly created National Assembly should be known as the 'representation of the French people, but the vanity of the bourgeois was offended by the word "people" which smelled too much of the mob in the language of the time. Mirabeau retorted that the English and the Americans always employed people in a nobler sense.' The word was born anew like the Brahman after his sacred thread ceremony. This word coined after the French Revolution was to feed the aspirations of other countries all over the world. The Indian Constitution opens with the momentous expression: 'We the People of India. . . .' Listening to all this the psychologist with a nod would point out that the word 'people' or the expression 'common man' is a statistical concept and should be viewed from the angle of frequency curve in statistics; the word people is associated with its numerical strength. While using the word people to think only in terms of a limited population, whatever may be its social or economic status, is repugnant to him due to its scientific inaccuracy. Putting the two views together we can now build a more composite picture of the common man.\* The word 'Indian' is another enigmatic expression. Apparently he did not exist in the times of Asoka or thereafter, he appeared in history much later. The word now has a complete meaning, and since he now exists, his existence must have had a beginning. The principal enquiry in this chapter is: How we should visualize the genesis of the word Indian.

\* Common man is an abstraction, he does not exist in reality, he represents a norm. A forced definition of the common man may be—one who after being born out of biological needs of others leads a life of no concern to the press reporter and ends his life in the table of vital statistics.

We learn that it was during the reign of Asoka that efforts were made for the first time to record chronicles and events. Searching for historical materials prior to this period we experience a great dearth of reliable evidence to construct a consistent historical picture of the time. The Vedic texts and the Smritis as already pointed out recount the norms of life, standards in behaviour, philosophic speculations, religious beliefs, etc. But they fail to satisfy the curiosity in other respects. The texts have little to reveal about the common man who actually is the harbinger of history. The texts fail to convey to the reader the impact of the precepts and canons of the *dharma shastras* on the inhabitants of the land: how far were these principles practised, how and under what conditions the social institutions changed in form? These questions remain mostly unanswered to satisfy the natural quest for knowledge.

The geophysical outlook of the Jains or the information left by them about the different parts of the country has been dismissed by some authors as fantastic and unreliable (24). 'These primitive geographers retained certain true observations in their geographical descriptions so far as they confined themselves to the visible objects but as soon as the question of the unknown came, their imagination indulged in fanciful flights' (.245). From the Jain texts we gather there were about twenty-five 'Aryan countries' and quite a few dozens of other countries—all in India—and the link between these countries was meagre indeed. No doubt there were roads—these are bound to be wherever there is human habitation—but they were not quite inviting to easy communication. The roads 'lay through forests and deserts and were beset with many dangers such as excessive rainfall, the fear of robbers, obstruction by rogues, elephants, the obstruction by state, forest conflagration, the bamboo forest, demons, ditches, wild beasts, droughts, famine and poisonous trees' (.116). Such were the conditions of roads and other means of communication when the only mode of transport for the ordinary man was the bullock cart.

One important source of factual evidence regarding the people in a wider field lies buried in the recorded impressions of the travellers who visited this country from time to time, and there were many during the Mauryan period. The narratives and documents however grew larger during the Muslim period. It

was during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya, as we know, that an attempt was made to force on India one single map as distinct from a land dotted by many kingdoms not unlike the city-states of ancient Greece. It was also during this period that the Greek traveller Megasthenes visited India. Alexander's expedition had produced quite a crop of visitors who have left behind narratives and memoirs relating to India, some reliable and others dubious. However a recorded document should be treated at its face value and in conjunction with other records that may be available. A name when turns into legend stands in the danger of losing proportionately in documentary value.

'Megasthenes, who being sent by Seleukos Nikator on an embassy to Sandrakottos (Chandragupta) the King of Prasii (Prachyas or the Easterners) whose capital was Palibothra (Pataliputra, now Patna) wrote a work on India' (22) called *The Indica*. Much of the material is lost and its fragments are held in esteem and quoted often. For instance we are told that 'When Megasthenes or Fahien came to India they found many clans and sects following different ways of life but could nevertheless group all of them together as the people of India' (1.9). In this statement the author has tried to give strength to his opinion that the feeling of Indian-ness experienced by the inhabitants is an age-old phenomenon. Since it is rather often that this kind of sentiment is expressed we may try to evaluate the authenticity and validity of the certificates granted by the foreigners.

The note of caution introduced earlier, that these old documents should be accepted with a certain amount of reservation, was not without reasons. There was hardly a clear-cut boundary of India when the Greeks visited the country and the knowledge they obtained was thus quite meagre and vague. Alexander on reaching the river Indus mistook it for the river Nile, and many Greek authors have written about the Indian land confusing it with Ethiopia. This is the sort of error which is pardonable but the mix-up sometimes is of different nature. Schwanbeck, the original editor of Megasthenes' fragments of reports made it clear that this traveller (Megasthenes) had seen only parts of Northern India 'and he (Megasthenes) acknowledges himself that he knew the lower part of the country traversed by the Ganges [*emphasis mine*, N.M.] only by heresy and report,' though the book is supposed to be on India. For example, 'It is



said [*emphasis mine*] that India, being of enormous size . . . is peopled by races both numerous and diverse'. Or, 'Among the Prasii in India there is found, *they say*, a species of apes of human-like intelligence, and which are to appearance about the size of Hurkanian dogs'. Megasthenic history of India does not end here.

While recounting these names and quoting the testimony of the travellers who have since gained fame, there is evinced an all too human temptation to place them on a legendary pedestal without proper scrutiny. There are quite a few things that could be said about Megasthenes and we may take notice of one statement that was made about him. The Roman geographer Strabo, who was a renowned traveller and who had travelled afar in Asia and whose Geography is reckoned as 'the most important and most comprehensive work on that science', has said: 'Generally speaking the men who have hitherto written on affairs of India were a set of liars—Deinachos holds the first place in the list, Megasthenes comes next. . . . No faith whatever can be placed in Deimachos and Megasthenes. They coined the fables concerning men with ears large enough to sleep in, men without any mouths, without noses, with only one eye, with spider legs, and with fingers bent backward' (22. 19).

When Megasthenes, or visitors like him, specifically describe a town or another it is understandable since such views may have been based on personal experience. When however they take upon themselves to speak of the sub-continent as a whole the reader is left in doubt. For instance Megasthenes has observed: 'It is said that India, being of enormous size when taken as a whole, is peopled by races both numerous and diverse, of which not even one was originally of foreign descent, but all were evidently indigenous' (. 34). It is for the historians to decide how much reliance may be placed on such dubious assertions. Elsewhere it is reported that 'Ktesias says that India is not of less size than the rest of Asia, Onesikritos regards it as the third part of the habitable world, and Nearchos says it takes one four months to traverse the plain only' (. 49). Apparently these travellers viewed India as commercial travellers from India would view Europe as one country after one of them visited Stockholm, another Rome and the third Madrid. Keeping in view that we have only disjointed records of Megasthenes it has to be admitted

that his statement regarding the lands he had visited, portraiture of the topography of the land and its geography, his observations on the caste, even though erroneous, are interesting. However, he is excellent when it comes to describing animals, as a matter of fact his innocent curiosity in animals and men with horns and feet turned backward had captured his imagination and such observations have gone to make most of his diary. He looked at the people like a child after leaving his village for the first time. However one certainly fails to get any impression of his having made an attempt to show that the inhabitants lived as a group and also as the people of India. Had Megasthenes visited Siam he would have included in all probability the Siamese among the Indians. The early travellers spoke of the people of India not as a homogeneous nationality, which concept could not have then existed, but as a collective noun to represent the inhabitants of a natural geographical area a good deal about which they had learnt by hearsay. In using the word European we do not mean a specific nationality but a broad ethnic group as different from, say, the Asians.

We may take this opportunity to make a brief review of some other authors on India, who in the current political jargon are held as 'India specialists'. Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) has recorded that 'There are many nations of Indians, and they do not speak of the same language as each other; some of them are nomads, and others not' (40. 1). Strabo (first century A.D.) has described different towns and regions separately without making any effort to link them. However he clearly distinguishes the Brahmans from the Buddhists and sometimes refers in a casual manner to certain tribal people in disjointed areas. Pliny (first century A.D.) viewed that 'In this country the nations and cities are numberless should one attempt to reckon them all up. . . . The companions of Alexander the Great have written that in that tract of India which he subdued, there were 5,000 towns . . . that its nations were nine in number' (40. 108). Visitors mostly came into contact with the Brahmans who were of the learned caste, and sometime Buddhists, and have left records of the people of these two communities alone. It may however be accepted that many other communities then lived in India but of these we hardly get any information. The description of the Brahmans was invariably undertaken by the foreigners like view-

ing and describing the Taj today, and we have scholars like Bardesanes, Porphyrios, Stobaios, Chrysostom, Alexandrinees, and many more who have left interesting details about the various types of Brahmans they came across and their ways of living. It is to be wondered whether the modern tourists visiting India can distinguish between the different castes and communities in the country and whether their version may always be held authentic. The present author has come across numerous American students of humanities visiting India with the purpose of collecting data in their respective subjects. One such student, sent by the U.S.A. as a state scholar, ritually rushed through Gūjarat, Assam and a few other far-flung states in order to collect data on what she described as 'Indian imagery'. Since she was a student of psychology the present author did not find it difficult to explain to her that imagery arise from the specific cultural base in which a person had lived for long, and it is improbable if there existed any *Indian* imagery. This student after listening patiently was quite convinced of the argument but at the end desperately ejaculated, 'Ya, I quite agree with what you say. But, when I go back I have to tell my people what is *Indian*. You see, Professor', she added with a little embarrassment. 'that is my assignment, and I am paid for it!'

We may now examine the views of some of the noted Chinese visitors. Fa-Hien was born somewhere between A.D. 317 and 420. Since all his brothers died young 'his father devoted him to the service of the Buddhist Society and had him entered as a Sramanera,\* still keeping him at home in the family. The little fellow fell dangerously ill, and the father sent him to the monastery, where he soon got well but refused to return to his parents' and thus began his life of a devotee. He came to India when he was twenty-five. Fa-Hien's original object was to search for copies of the Vinaya (the Books of Discipline in Buddhistic religion). That Fa-Hien was a devout Buddhist, and a man fired with one solitary goal in life can be seen from his steadfast pursuit of his object. It was his keen desire to visit the Buddhist monasteries in India, meet the monks, and read the original texts. Beyond these pursuits his interest was at the most casual.

\* Sramana is the name for Buddhist monks 'those who have separated themselves from their families, and quieted their hearts from all intrusion of desire and lust'.

In his striking simplicity of language and yet methodically he has described the archaeological details of the monasteries he had visited, the ritual acts and ritual objects related to his religion that he had observed, has devoted chapters to Buddha, to the legends then current about Buddha, and so on. Incidentally, he has also made reference to the kings who were kind to him, to the sympathy of monks to pilgrims and so on. His whole narrative is strictly limited within the horizon of his pilgrimage and as a devout Buddhist he did not permit himself any distraction. He may have had time to look around but showed little interest or inclination in any other subject besides his own. After reading about the travels of Fa-Hien the reader would fail to see how the name of this monk could be used against the contextual background on the subject-matter in our view (41). It may be added here that almost all the Buddhist travellers who had visited India were interested only in the northern part of India where Buddhism had originated and where it had flourished. The usual route lay through the mountain passes in the north-west and after visiting different places of pilgrimage they generally left via Tamluk (Tamralipti), now in West Bengal, and then to Ceylon or Java. Therefore their impressions of 'India' could not have been better than those of the modern tourists 'doing' India in a week.

During the halcyon days of Buddhism in India quite a few pilgrims from China had visited India and Ceylon. As ardent followers of Buddhism their object was mainly to visit the shrines and stupas, hold discourses with the monks and collect relevant literature. On returning home many of these pilgrims prepared records of their experience and it is to be expected that the authors would evince a slant in their writing. Many Hindus on visiting Amarnath or Gangotri have written descriptions of their journey but these narratives could hardly be treated at par with the records of a sociologist or social anthropologist, the reportage of a press reporter or the memorandum of a visiting magistrate; each will have a slant of its own. Naturally it cannot be expected of the people on pilgrimage to take much notice of the social life of the inhabitants, though some have proved to be remarkable in their power of observation and grasping.

Fa-Hien's sincerity of purpose flows through the whole of his

diary recording the places of his visits—he refers to the different regions as countries—and the places of worship, we gather about his learning Sanskrit language, the pains he took to copy the Buddhist texts, and so on. It is apparent that he had little acquaintance with others besides monks and nuns, neither does he give any indication of existing communication between different regions or people. That he came to know the Brahmans well he has made quite clear but beyond that caste his interest failed to grow out. There is one singular exception and this observation is related to his experience in Mathura. "Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature. . . . The only exception is that of *chandalas*. That is the name for those who are (held to be) wicked men, and live apart from others. When they enter the gate of a city or a market-place, they strike a piece of wood to make themselves known, so that men know and avoid them, and do not come into contact with them" (41. 43).

Hiuen-Tsiang was another pilgrim who came to India at the age of twenty-six and stayed in India from A.D. 629-645. His records were drawn up at the command of his monarch, and it is a remarkable document indeed. It stands testimony to the author's patience, scholarship and honesty of purpose. The slant of a pilgrim is there—all those who did not profess Buddhism are dubbed as heretics—nonetheless it is evident that he kept his eyes open and relied more on them than what he had heard from the natives of the land much of which was customarily meant to impress a traveller.

Hiuen-Tsiang unlike Fa-Hien had not only lived longer in India but had also gained closer acquaintance with the people before he recorded his views. 'With respect to the ordinary people', he says, 'although they are naturally light-minded, yet they are upright and honourable. In money matters they are without craft, and in administration of justice they are considerate. . . . They are not deceitful or treacherous in their conduct, and are faithful to their oaths and promises' (42. 83). However what is relevant to our purpose is his observation that, 'The entire land is divided into seventy countries or so' (. 70) and 'we find that the names of India (T'ienchu) are various and perplexing as to their authority. It was anciently called Shin-tu, also Hien-tau; but now according to the right pronunciation, it

is called In-tu. *The people of In-tu call their country by different names according to their district [emphasis mine, N.M.]. Each country has diverse customs. Aiming at a general name which is the best sounding, we call the country In-tu' (. 69).*

What we gather from this document is that there existed a large number of countries each ruled by a monarch who had a capital of his own. Each country as described by this traveller was inhabited by what appears to be a self-contained population which did not enjoy frequent contact with the neighbouring countries though trade may have existed between these countries. In the absence of a distinct name to represent the whole land a name perforce was given by the traveller but we do not know if this name actually existed.

From what could be gathered in the above it is difficult to feel convinced that 'All down the ages, there has been an awareness of an India that transcends all differences of province, caste, language and creed' (3. 4). This sounds like tailoring history for a historical purpose, but the ways of altering footprints of history by removing tomb-stones we have not accepted. There is no reason to believe that the majority of the people or even a substantial minority were concerned with what went round the sub-continent. For such a situation to arise, viz., of intercommunication among the different 'countries', there must exist prior conditions to be fulfilled, the issue of need requirements was as important then as it is today. Trade and commerce is one such reason but not of significant value to bring about social proximity. Had it been so then the British and the Indian would have been on a much better social plane in the early twentieth century. As we may witness in comparatively recent times a few *marwaris* for reasons of trade and commerce settled down in Assam or Bengal a century earlier and thereafter evolved a different pattern of living, or that some *cheltians* migrated to Burma, but then such cases are to be found on a very limited scale. Even then, each community endeavours to retain its own identity.

Actually, the main incentives in matters of social intercommunication and intercourse are provided by the stimuli which have bearing on social life. Marriage is one such social mechanism. In this case it cannot be held that people of one state, province or country or by whatever name each region may have been then

known permitted intercommunity marital relation. Education is another stimulus. There no doubt were some educational institutions which admitted students on almost an all-India scale. Here again the barrier of caste stood against free mixing. Occasions for public agitation arising out of desired social upliftment or political movements did not arise then, and this is one factor which we now find conducive to the growth of intercommunity feeling.

It may not be irrelevant to point out that until recently even an educated person in north India was not clearly aware of the distinction between a Telugu, Tamil, Malayalee or Kanadi, all being bracketed under the term Madras. One has only to ask a person in Cochin or Mysore to find out if he can distinguish between Bengalis and Assamese. In the early pre-partition days of 1947 this author had occasions to ask educated Bengali Hindus the significance of the important Muslim festivals and, also, quite a few educated Muslims were questioned regarding their knowledge of the Hindu festivals. It caused no little dismay at the ignorance and apathy expressed in their answers particularly when we come to think of these two communities having lived side by side for centuries. What was true of Bengal then is true of any other part of the country even today, as it may have been when Megasthenes, Fa-Hien and others had visited the peninsula.

It may be pointed out here, by the way, that many responsible persons have not only felt satisfied that in the remote past there existed conditions reflecting complete integration but have also endeavoured to give it a stamp of continuity and perpetuity. For instance, in the report that was quoted above it is stated: 'There were ugly incidents here and there when Hinduism was supplanting Buddhism and Jainism but, on the whole, the preaching of doctrine, however obnoxious to popular belief, evoked no outburst of violent feelings' (3. 6). A student of social sciences may here be entitled to ask himself: if a few ugly incidents have not marred the picture of perpetual tranquillity and unity then a thousand years hence historians may report that there were only a few ugly incidents in India between nineteen-fifties and sixties and that these were located in a very few limited areas, and the country as a whole enjoyed integrated living.

For the present we may conclude that during the Hindu-Jainistic-Buddhistic period there were perhaps no violent signs of animosity noticeable. Nevertheless complete unanimity could not have been the rule of the day. The barriers were raised by the issues of inter-social communication as in religious groups, difference in language and community culture. Having no reasons to move out of their kingdom and country the people by and large tended to remain in comparatively isolated states.

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## II

Let us now search for facts concerning the Muslim period. Here we need not make any distinction between India after Turkish invasion or Moghul invasion since the broad facts are that foreigners had invaded the land and these foreigners not only did not bear any resemblance to the local people in matters of religion and culture but had a deep-set motive of ruling people they had considered inferior to themselves. It is worth our while to remember the main problem we have in view in this chapter. It is intended here to trace the growth and development of the feeling of Indian-ness. If we accept the statement quoted previously, viz., all down the ages, there has been an awareness of an India that transcends all differences of province, caste, language and creed, then of course the problem will be dissolved.

Reviewing the conditions in medieval India the Committee on Emotional Integration reports with regrets that ‘Unfortunately, the political unity of the country was not maintained, and despite the reformer-saints’ preaching, the evils of the caste system could not be eradicated. Thus when the Turks invaded India, the country fell an easy prey to them. The Muslim conquest of India was of a kind which had no parallel in her past history. The conqueror came with a Book which embodied, in his mind, truths and injunctions said to have been directly revealed by God; he had a mission in life and brought a message to mankind. He did not, therefore, live by the sword alone, for his sword was said to have been inspired by the word of God. He was not, therefore, like previous invaders and could not be absorbed and assimilated in the same way. His distinctiveness had to be recognized and respected; unity had to be



achieved on a different plane' (3. 10). This statement is charged with materials of psychological significance bearing on the present context and therefore should be examined more closely.

Firstly, if it be suggested that schism in the society caused by caste distinctions was responsible for political disunity which ultimately made the country an easy prey to foreign invasion, in that case it would be difficult to explain how despite the same social evils this country succeeded in attaining freedom from foreign bondage. Among the Hindus at any rate there was a clearly established political unity, overriding the caste distinctions, which was responsible for the transfer of power. Again accepting the premises in the statement contained in the Report we cannot explain either the social dichotomy existing in the two wings of Pakistan even though the people there are not badgered with religious heterodoxy. The conclusion that can be drawn is that political unity is not subservient to religious unity. This kind of outlook can only grow from the wish to see one single religious nationality which as we have seen in the preceding chapter is a redundant ideology. Again, the concept of caste does not originate from any one source. Looking into the present-day conditions we find that casteism, based on religious grounds, has been abolished by the Constitution even though sanctioned by the Vedas. But the social caste barriers, as delineated by profession, etc. and of which we shall have to discuss at length elsewhere, have not been demolished and is difficult to do in foreseeable future. Further, it may be remembered that caste distinctions based on colour, and social status continue to prevail in many of the politically advanced societies and Christ's preaching in this respect has proved of little avail.

Secondly, there emerges in the above statement a pathetic faith on reformer-saints' preaching in matters which are essentially politico-legal. The reformer-saints may have tried palliative measures owing to the exigency of the situations arising and also due to our past ignorance of the underlying causative factors in the caste system and communal disharmony. But the statement reveals a tendency to give priority to the preachings of the reformer-saints over the cumulative knowledge of modern psychology, sociology and anthropology and overlook the powers embodied in the constitutional laws of the country. History fails to record any case of integration, as different from assimila-

tion, having taken place owing to the missionary zeal of preachers or saints. It was enacted either 'with the sword or by legal sanction. In our own life-time we have witnessed the lamentable failure of the greatest saint in modern times. On a certain day in 1947 when the country revelled and rejoiced to greet free India this saint preferred to stay afar, offering solace with his withering hands to those who needed his presence, acknowledging his failure with remorse.

However the most important issue is involved in the last two sentences of the quoted statement. Signatories to the report on emotional integration have used the terms assimilation and integration as synonymous expression. Presuming that this was not done inadvertently, since the supporting evidence is there, they have expressed a mental attitude which is not basically different from the attitudes prevailing in the pre-British days. Muslims, by and large, wanted the Hindus to be assimilated and absorbed within the Islamic fold. It is rather strange that a similar intention, using a more polite language, should have been used by the Committee of Emotional Integration.

If by integration is meant that one cultural or religious group should be assimilated by another cultural or religious group then the use of the word integration would be misplaced. Integration essentially means accepting the difference in others' personality, culture, civilization and yet maintain harmonious social intercourse through the various channels that may be available. Integration accepts the plausibility of conflicts and yet successfully resolves them, assimilation dissolves the conflicts by refusing to accept their existence. Assimilation presumes the sense of inclusion, integration affords freedom. Assimilation is tantamount to subjugation, whereas integration stands for unity in diversity and this is the grand acquisition of the fundamental rights guaranteed to the people of India under its Constitution.

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In the eyes of the early Muslim invaders, as a liberal historian Rawlinson puts it, 'India was *dar-ul-harb*, a land of warfare, handed over by God to true believers to plunder'. But it was not merely a case of religious bigotry but something more. The prevailing idea was either-you-or-I live, there was no place for co-existence under Muslim rule. The trend of events then pre-

vailing indicates that subjugated conditions in living applied not only to the Hindu-Muslim relationship but extended to the sphere of intra-Muslim relationship. 'During the early part of the reign of Ala-ud-din there was a continual threat of invasion on the part of the dreaded Mongols, and in 1297 a number of Mongols who had settled in India were ruthlessly butchered' (14. 226). Reviewing the political conditions prevalent in India during the reign of Sultans another student has summarised as follows: 'the Sultanate was based purely on force; tyranny was essential for its working . . . an indiscriminate shedding of blood irrespective of the distinction of Muslim and non-Muslim was dictated by the policy of the state. Even considerations of kinship had no place in the theory of monarchy; the murder and assassination of kinsmen, however repugnant to the sense of religion or humanity, were committed without much sense of shame or fear of public opinion' (13. 14). Further, 'the status of a Sultan was raised to that of a Divine being. . . . It was not open to the Muslims to exercise the right of choosing an *Imam*' (. 18). Obviously this was not the atmosphere for the sense of one-India to grow, not the sort of India under our contemplation.

Feroz Shah (1351-1388) is regarded as the best among the Muslim rulers before Akbar. He was a great builder who was bent upon turning Delhi into a city of noble architecture. Asoka's pillars were bodily removed from Ambala and Meerut to Delhi and this indeed was an engineering feat. To achieve this end he captured about two lakh Hindus as slaves, converted them to Islam and pressed them into service of glorifying his kingdom. He no doubt took strong measures against bribery and corruption at his court but the methods were such that none would think of emulating him in the modern society. 'No one could stir without his knowledge, and whatever happened in the houses of nobles, and great men, and officials, was communicated to the Sultan by his reporters . . . the Sultan gave commands that noblemen and great men should not visit each other's houses, or give feasts, or hold meetings. . . . To such a length was this last prohibition carried that no stranger was admitted into a nobleman's house' (43. 179). Again, 'After the promulgation of these interdicts, the Sultan requested the wise men to supply some rules and regulations for grinding down

the Hindus, and for depriving them of that wealth and property which fosters disaffection and rebellion. . . . The Hindu was to be so reduced as to be left unable to keep a horse to ride on, to carry arms, to wear fine clothes, or to enjoy any of the luxuries of life. . . . No Hindu could hold up his head, and in their houses no sign of gold or silver . . . or of any superfluity was to be seen. . . . Driven by desitution, the wives of *khuts* and *mukaddims* went and served for hire in the houses of Musulmans' (. 183). Asked by the Sultan to clarify the position of the Hindu subjects his kazi stated: the Hindus 'are called payers of tribute, and when the revenue officer demands silver from them, they should, without question and with all humility, tender gold. If the officer throws dirt into their mouths, they must without reluctance open their mouths wide to receive it' (. 184). An officer submitted that some of the Hindu subjects had failed to pay taxes and he had therefore taken due measures; he boasted that his line of action has 'made my subjects obedient, so that at my command, they are ready to creep into holes like mice'. Endorsing this grand administrative device of the officer the Sultan observed: 'I am an unlettered man, but I have seen a great deal; be assured then that the Hindus will never become submissive and obedient till they are reduced to poverty. I have, therefore, given orders that just sufficient shall be left to them from year to year, of corn, milk, and curds, but that they shall not be allowed to accumulate hoards and property' (. 185). This was the way of assimilation and not of integration. These acts were cruel exhibitions of arrogance, and of perpetuation of slavery both of body and mind.

The Moghul period proved no better. Aurangzeb has often been singled out by the historians for his social crimes and his name frequently appears in such narratives. This perhaps is due to the fact that he was at the bottom of the list of despots and also closest to us in history. But there is no reason to believe that the rest of the Moghul emperors were akin to Akbar or more favourably disposed towards their subjects. Humayun reminded his 'followers of the magnificent example of sacrifice shown by the 12,000 guards of the Safavi monarch Isma'il (in Isphahan) who jumped into a ravine to fetch his falling handkerchief and thus perished to a man' (13. 5). A few more examples may be cited here by way of illustrating the point. A

chronicler of Shahjehan's reign has recorded that 'It had been brought to the notice of His Majesty that during the late reign many idol temples had been begun, but remained unfinished, at Benares, the great stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His Majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders, that at Benares, and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that seventy-six temples had been destroyed in the district of Benares' (44. 36). 'This is the emperor whose name is glorified in connection with a magnificent specimen of architecture. Elsewhere the author narrates of the same monarch: 'On the 11th Muharram, Kasim Khan and Bahadur Kambu brought . . . 400 Christian prisoners, male and female, young and old, with the idols of their worship, to the presence of the faith-defending Emperor. He ordered that the principles of the Muhammadan religion should be explained to them, and that they should be called upon to adopt it. A few appreciated the honour offered to them and embraced the faith: they experienced the kindness of the Emperor. . . . But the majority in perversity and wilfulness rejected the proposal. These were distributed among the *amirs*, who were directed to keep these despicable wretches in rigorous confinement. When any one of them accepted the true faith, a report was to be made to the Emperor, so that provision might be made for him. Those who refused were to be kept in continual confinement. So it came to pass that many of them passed from prison to hell. Such of their idols as were likeness of the prophets were thrown into the Jumna, the rest were broken to pieces' (. 43).

A few instances may here be quoted for obtaining a glimpse into the reign of Aurangzeb. As one of his chroniclers has recorded, 'Hindu writers have been entirely excluded from holding public offices, and all the worshipping places of the infidels and the great temples of these infamous people have been thrown down and destroyed in a manner which excites astonishment at the successful completion of so difficult a task. His Majesty personally teaches the sacred *kalima* to many infidels with success, and invests them with *khil'ats* and other favours' (45).

'On the 24th Rabi'u-l akhir, Khan-Jahan Bahadur arrived from Jodhpur, bringing with him several cart-loads of idols, taken

from the Hindu temples that had been razed. His Majesty gave him great praise. Most of these idols were adorned with precious stones, or made of gold, silver, brass, copper, or stone; it was ordered that some of them should be cast away in the out-offices, and the remainder placed beneath the steps of the grand mosque, there to be trampled under foot' (46. 187).

'On the 7th Muharram Hasan Ali Khan made his appearance with twenty camels taken from Rana, and stated that the temple situated near the palace (of Jodhpur), and one-hundred and twenty-two more in the neighbouring districts, had been destroyed. This chieftain was, for his distinguished services, invested with the title of Bahadur' (46. 188).

All this however was bound to come. The morning had shown the oncoming day in the eleventh century when a courtier of Mahmud of Ghazni, Alberuni by name, prepared 'An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Law and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030'. Eschewing oriental style of using superlatives Alberuni has narrated a continuous description of India in cool and passionless language using cold logic which may be a lesson even to the modern press reporters. He was a rare type of Muslim, and that too in the company of Mahmud! He had learnt Sanskrit in order to translate some of the ancient texts as also to obtain a first-hand account of the Hindu mind. It is too tempting not to quote him in detail which is done of necessity to understand other man's point of view; the opening of the first volume (47) provides us with the requisite material.

'Before entering on our exposition', he says, 'we must form an adequate idea of that which renders it so particularly difficult to penetrate to the essential nature of any Indian subject. . . . For the reader must always bear in mind that the Hindus entirely differ from us in every respect, many a subject appearing intricate and obscure which would be perfectly clear if there were more connection between us. The barriers which separates Muslims and Hindus rest on different causes.

'First, they differ from us in everything which other nations have in common. And here as we first mention the language, although the difference of language also exists between other nations. If you want to conquer this difficulty (i.e. to learn Sanskrit), you will not find it easy.' Here he gives reasons based

on phonetic difficulties, multiplicity of prevailing languages, etc. Lucidly he goes on to illustrate his case: 'if we tell the reader that we have sometimes written down a word from the mouth of Hindus, taking the greatest pains to fix its pronunciation, and then afterwards when we repeated it to them they had great difficulty in recognizing it' in the same way as an Indian student finds it difficult to make himself understood in England even though he may have studied the language in India for years together.

'Secondly they totally differ from us in religion, as we believe in nothing in which they believe, and vice versa. On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves . . . all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them. . . . They are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion. This, too, renders any connection with them quite impossible, and constitutes the widest gulf between us and them.

'In the third place, in all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress, and our ways and customs, and as to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper. By the way, we must confess, in order to be just, that similar depreciation of foreigners not only prevails among us and the Hindus, but is common to all nations towards each other. . . .

'Another circumstance which increased the already existing antagonism between Hindus and foreigners is that the so-called Shamaniyya (Buddhists), though they cordially hate the Brahmins, still are nearer akin to them than to others.' He was apparently unaware of the attempts to assimilate the Buddhists which process was not applicable to the Muslims.

' . . . Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions. . . . Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu

sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources.

'In the fifth place, there are other causes, the mention of which sounds like a satire . . . the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge of science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is. One of their scholars, Varahamihira, in a passage where he calls on the people to honour the Brahmans, says: "*The Greeks though impure, must be honoured, since they were trained in sciences, and therein excelled others. What, then, are we to say of a Brahman, if he combines with his purity the height of science?*" In former times, the Hindus used to acknowledge that the progress of science due to the Greeks is much more important than that which is due to themselves. But from this passage of Varahamihira alone you see what a self-lauding man he is, whilst he gives himself airs as doing justice to others. At first I stood to their astronomers in the relation of a pupil to his master, being a stranger among them and not acquainted with their peculiar national and traditional methods of science. On having made some progress, I began to show them the elements on which this science rests, to point out to them some rules of logical deduction and the scientific methods of all mathematics, and then they flocked together round me from all parts, wondering, and most eager to learn from me, asking me at the same time from what Hindu master I had



learnt those things, whilst in reality I showed them what they were worth, and thought myself a great deal superior to them, disdaining to be put on a level with them. They almost thought me to be a sorcerer, and when speaking of me to their leading men in their native tongue, they spoke of me as *the sea* or as *the water which is so acid that vinegar in comparison is sweet*. Now such is the state of things in India.'

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In the history of Muslim rule in India one monarch stood apart from the rest and that was Akbar. He did not stand alone only for his actions but also in his ways of thinking. Here was a man who had his conflicts and to have any conflict in the midst of smuggy self-complacence of the Hindus and Muslims was a notable psychological change. He could not, or may be he dared not, tear himself away completely from the principles of assimilation introduced in the body politic of his predecessors, at the same time he did think in terms of integration. He was pulled by various forces as may be seen through the two sets of biographical narratives, one composed by Abul Fazal (*Akbar Nama*) and the other by Abdul Kadir Badauni (*Tarikh-i-Badauni*). One speaks in eulogical terms of Akbar's efforts to coalesce the different trends in the prevalent thoughts while the other had nothing but contempt for the monarch for his leniency towards the Hindus.

With the passage of time Akbar's conflicts grew in strength and he must have felt desperate in introducing a third force. The more freedom he gave to the religious leaders of the various sects and communities the more his good intentions grew into pandemonia. Perhaps this was natural. In the atmosphere of either-you-live-or-I which had almost become a canon, a rather sudden ushering of democratic idea could have been misunderstood and each group vied with the other to strengthen its own position and this is what actually happened at the meetings held each week at the *Ibadat-Khana* or the House of Discourse. Let us take a sample from the *Akbar-Nama*.

'Sufis, doctors, preachers, lawyers, Sunnis, Shi'as, Brahmans, Jains, Buddhists, *Char-baks* (Hindu materialists), Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and learned men of every belief, were gathered together in the royal assembly, and were filled with

delight. Each one fearlessly brought forward his assertions and arguments, and the disputations and contentions were long and heated. Every sect, in its vanity and conceit, attacked and endeavoured to refute the statements of their antagonists. . . . One night the *Ibadat-Khana* was brightened by the presence of Padre Radalf, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him, and this afforded an opportunity for a display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame; and then they began to attack the contradictions in the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness and earnest conviction of the truth, the Padre replied to their arguments, and then he went on to say: "If these men have such an opinion of our Book, and if they believe the Quran to be the true word of God, then let a furnace be lighted, and let me with the Gospel in my hand, and the '*ulama* with their holy book in their hands, walk into that testing place of truth, and the right will be manifest." The black-hearted mean-spirited disputants shrank from this proposal, and answered only with angry words. This prejudice and violence greatly annoyed the impartial mind of the Emperor, and, with great discrimination and enlightenment, he said: "Man's outward profession and the mere letter of Muhammadanism, without a heartfelt conviction, can avail nothing. I have forced many Brahmans, by fear of my power, to adopt the religion of my ancestors; but now that my mind has been enlightened with the beams of truth, I have become convinced that the dark clouds of conceit and the mist of self-opinion have gathered round you, and that not a step can be made in advance without the torch of proof. That course only can be beneficial which we select with clear judgment. To repeat the words of the Creed, to perform circumcision, or to lie prostrate on the ground from dread of kingly power, can avail nothing in the sight of God" (48).'

But Akbar's views were his own and proved feeble in their implementation. Not only his attempts to establish a new religious system, *Tauhid-i Ilahi* or Divine Monotheism, failed to receive any response and was unceremoniously abolished by the

next emperor but the old order of things came to the fore very soon.\* Abul Fazal perhaps was nearer to the truth when out of his cleverness he spoke of Akbar's eclectic creed that it had 'the great advantage of not losing what is good in one religion while gaining whatever is better in the other. In that way however would be rendered to God; peace would be given to the peoples and *security to the Empire* [*emphasis mine*]'. After bringing the huge sub-continent under his hegemony Akbar perhaps was in search for ways and means of maintaining *security of his empire* since it was a profitable way of maintaining peace when a monarch those days had to keep himself perpetually engaged in continuous state of war at one region of the empire or another and also remain alert to ceaseless intrigues which became synonymous with Moghul Courts.

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At the risk of sounding rhetoric the author feels tempted to compare the advent of Islam in this country as a huge rough stone

\* In recent years when a renewed attempt was made to compile the biography of Newton by re-evaluating and assessing the historical evidence and facts a peculiar dichotomous nature of his personality was revealed. A man who gave us the laws of motion which were to be the main instruments in our understanding nature also used to secretly indulge in the practice of alchemy. If Akbar's biography were treated on similar lines we may find quite a few glaring contradictions. There can be little doubt that his was a whimsical personality and it matched with the feudal style of living. A couple of illustrations are given here.

'One day, when His Majesty was taking his dinner, it occurred to his mind that probably the eyes of some hungry one had fallen upon the food; how, therefore, could he eat it while the hungry were debarred from it? He therefore gave orders that every day some hungry persons should be fed with some of the food prepared for himself, and that afterwards he should be served' (49). Let us compare this bounteous beneficence with its none-too-pleasant counterpart. Narrating an incident of an evening when the emperor was perturbed over the news from Deccan an author says that the king 'happened to come out (that evening) sooner than usual . . . and at first found none of the servants in the palace. When he came near the throne and couch, he saw a luckless lamplighter, coiled up like a snake, in a careless death-like sleep, close to the royal couch. Enraged at the sight, he ordered him to be thrown from the tower, and he was dashed into a thousand pieces' (50). This sort of inconsistency in the expressions in behaviour is commonly held as the sign of maladjusted personality common in children or psychotic patients and does not fit in with the picture of a wholesome or integrated personality.

pugnaciously thrown in the tranquil waters of an old pond, a pond which had held for centuries weeds and mud and also cool water; and this created ripples in more than one direction.

The presence of a body of men totally irreconciled to the ways of living and thinking prevalent in the country led to more than one problem to be reckoned with. There arose a state of continuous and consistent conflict which neither side could resolve, nevertheless the sufferers had to adjust themselves under the irreversible. There is no one who has not faced conflicts in his personal or social life, but its presence does not mean that the man must give vent to his feelings: for some it may be a case of 'cannot' and for others it is a case of 'will not'. He follows the inescapable path of adjusting himself. There are many paths in the adjustive process, the person may accept it as an unavoidable grief and remain subdued, accept it as the inherent right of both the parties, he may not accept it but fail to react against it, or he may have opportunities to rise against the opposing view and win or lose. All these forces but one, viz., integrative force can be witnessed playing during the Muslim period. There was no question of the two broad communities coming together on a plane of consent and concurrence.

A sultan or an emperor might have proved to be a man of piety and charity or may have acted as an absolute despot, the latter being generally the case, and there were no doubt cases of individual difference which hardly made any difference in the major policy of the ruler. Sense of equality as we understand today did not exist among the Hindus, and the Muslim was prepared to accept equality only where another Muslim was concerned and that too not as a rule. Social stratification was no less pronounced among the Muslims but as members of an in-group they followed a code of conduct not applicable to the members of the out-group. However, as it stood then the Hindus called the Muslims *mlecchas*, while *Kafir* was the retributive term hurled at the Hindus, in the Buddhists' eyes the Hindus were heretics, and the Christians referred to the Hindus as heathens and to the Muslims as turks and moors.

Secondly, the system of conversion introduced by the Muslim society gave rise to another source of social conflict. It was mostly in the bottom rung of the social ladder that the Muslims found their converts and more often than not these persons

remained slaves. The slave being a convert to Islam theoretically could demand rights of equality with other Muslims though the idea was not often put into practice. Nonetheless an erst-while Sudra who was denied the rights of worshipping with the Brahmins in the same temple found himself following conversion in an emancipated mood, he could stand inside the mosque along with the Emperor and take part in communal worship. Since no longer he was in the Hindu fold he was free to stand before a Hindu and demand the treatment meted out to any other Muslim, at any rate there was a theoretical possibility of this situation arising. Let it be remembered that slavery was not unknown in the Hindu society. Relationship between the master and the slave was made clear by Manu and Kautilya. But slavery in the Muslim society was not exactly of the same nature. The slave had certain moral claims in the feeling of brotherhood and equality and the consequences could not be totally dismissed. A purchased slave could cherish secret ambitions to rise to the throne of an emperor, while a Hindu Sudra could hardly dream so.

Thirdly, the proselytizing character inherent in Islam naturally strengthened further the in-group feeling among the Hindus. A group possessed with a strong feeling of belonging together to the exclusion of others is called *in-group* or *we-group* in psychology. The opposite group character is the feeling of *they-group*, members of which are explicitly recognized as not belonging. As to how this group feeling may arise, i.e. its psychology, we have examined before. It is however mostly a situation impregnated with the feeling of threat that strengthens the *we* feeling. Anyway, foreign invasion, continued rule by a community with a very different outlook, aggressiveness on the part of the rulers and in all probability similar other threatening circumstances may have created among the Hindus an intense feeling of let's-stand-together type. The continued fear had offered good reasons for the Hindus not to shed their orthodoxy and bigotry but to cling to these more tenaciously, and all this robbed the Hindus of the chance of witnessing Reformation in their fold or begetting a reformer of the calibre of Saint Loyola.

It would be idle to deny that there was little scope for smooth social communication among the Hindus. There were stratifications in the Hindu religion based on caste system. Distinctions

between one religion and another were there not only between Hindus and Muslims but also between Hindus and Buddhists. Distinction in the latter sphere perhaps was not quite sharp though its existence could hardly be denied.

Social communication among the linguistic areas must have also suffered for two reasons, and in this connection we should try to visualize the fact that owing to undeveloped roads and inadequate means of transport communication between one region and another was bound to have been limited. There was little impetus for a person to travel beyond the boundaries of his own village or state since there was hardly any need for it. The peasants and cultivators had no need to travel then just as they do not have now. Generally people travelled either on business or on religious grounds. Incidentally, it was a common practice among the pilgrims visiting far-off places to leave behind their last will and testament. Robbers and thugs, wild beasts and lack of adequate safeguards were to be reckoned with. Akbar on his way back from Kashmir had an occasion to observe: 'It is forty years since I saw snow, and there are many men with me, born and bred in Hind, who have never seen it. If a snow-storm should come upon us in the neighbourhood of Pakhali, it would be a kind dispensation of Providence.' Yet, the people he referred to were residents of regions very near to Kashmir.

Local self-government is one of the oldest institutions in India; the cities and towns were well laid out and administered with efficiency during the Hindu period, but this was true mainly of the particular localities. The inter-state roads were few. The need for better roads for visiting the remote parts of the country grew with the development of the imperialist power to meet the requirements of the army, and not for the masses of inhabitants. With the decay of the Muslim rule things grew worse. More than one historian has observed that 'For the insecurity of the roads and of property in general made trade a precarious matter' (14. 399).

From Tavernier we learn that a journey from Surat to Agra took thirty-five to forty days. People travelled in groups and in caravans and the traveller warned: 'He who desires to travel with honour in India, whether by carriage or palankeen, ought

to take with him 20 or 30 armed men, some with bows and arrows and others with muskets' (51. 38).

Social stratification had existed also on the basis of class distinction not necessarily based on religious grounds. During the Hindu period cultivable land had always belonged to the monarch and was distributed at the King's discretion.\* Rights to property were further curtailed during the Muslim period. In the Wakiat-I Jahangiri we find the twelve Institutes established by the then Emperor the third of which is related to the free inheritance of property of deceased persons. 'When an infidel or Musulman in any part of my dominions, his property and effects were to be allowed to descend by inheritance, without interference from any one.' It was further added 'When there was no heir, then officers were to be appointed to take charge of the property and to expend it according to the law of Islam in building mosques and *sarais*, the repairing of broken bridges, and in digging tanks and wells' (52). This no doubt speaks of the generosity of the royal personage who remained happy 'with a *sir* of wine and half a *sir* of meat' and of course Nur Jehan's company. However the Institutes were conspicuous more in breach. The fact is that, rights of owning property had precarious foundations, whereas the sense of possessing property has contributed a major share not only in shaping our civilization but also in constructing the social web. It is for the legal historians to tell us how the laws related to rights have changed their course from time to time. The famous travellers Francis Bernier, Jean Baptiste Tavernier and Niccolao Manucci who visited India in the seventeenth century have unequivocally held that the inhabitants of the land had very limited rights over their property which were mainly vested with the ruling monarch.

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The Indian that we have been in search remained lost in the vast maze of the peninsula bound by the high seas and high mountain walls. The gateways on the north-west remained open for pilgrims to enter the holy land which were nonetheless used by looters and plunderers who ruled with the aid of satraps;

\* 'Land prepared for cultivation shall be given to taxpayers only for life. Unprepared lands shall not be taken away from those who are preparing them for cultivation' (Kautilya, II, 4, 7).

some stayed in this country and made it their homeland, contributing their share in their own way in the shaping of culture and manners while maintaining their distinction. In this historical medley, and how we wish we could call it a symphony, we find the inhabitants labelled as Buddhists or Jains, Kaffirs or Mlechchas, faithful and infidel, gentiles, and idolaters, Brahmans and Sudras, tamils and pallavas but never as the *Indian*. The Indian was in the making. The common man who is the backbone of history of a country and a nation was left out of account by the makers of history. He merely existed. But he wanted to live and not simply exist, he was growing in his desire to be acknowledged.

### III

The East India Company was founded in 1599. In 1612 it acquired land at Surat for its factory and by 1687 it was arching its back to establish a 'sure English Dominion in India' and a 'Sovereign State in India', and it was worth indeed. Thereafter India was visited by waves of tourists, commoners, merchants and socialites who didn't fetch dollars and sterlings but have left abundant material for constructing the psychological history of the times and we may look into the accounts of some of these.

Edward Terry was a chaplain to Sir Thomas Row, Ambassador to Jehangir (1615-18). He visited what he called the mysterious East-India, not India, 'a large part of Asia the Great'. He, as others, had met the inhabitants closely and as a soft-spoken good Christian he has separately described each part of the population he had come across. Terry was no doubt interested in the people and has left an impress that he had seen the people at close quarters. 'For the Mahometans (who live much upon the labours of the Hindooes, keeping them under, because they formerly conquered them) there are many of those idle, and know better to eat than work; and these are all for tomorrow, a word very common in their mouths; and the word is *sub-ba*, which signifies tomorrow, and when that day comes, tomorrow; and so still tomorrow, they will set down upon their business tomorrow, will do any thing you would have them to do tomorrow, they will bestow any thing upon you *sub-ba*, tomorrow'



(53. 235). It is a good portrayal of the ruling class which was on the decline. Christianity though was not widespread, Christians there were in the persons of the Dutch and Spaniards who had come to do business but some of the business they did was not so good. 'It is a most sad and horrible thing to consider what scandal there is brought upon the Christian religion, by the looseness and remisness, by the exorbitances of many, which come amongst them, who profess themselves Christians, of whom I have often heard of the natives (who live near the port where our ships arrive) say thus, in broken English which they have gotten, "Christian religion, Devil religion, Christian much drunk, Christian do wrong, much beat, much abuse others" (. 239). There are another sect, or sort of Heathens living among them called Parsees.' And of course he has done justice to the 'Hindoos or Heathens which inhabit that empire' by devoting a separate chapter on them.

Robert Orme visited Indostan in 1706 'in the Honourable Company's service as physician and surgeon' (54). Speaking of the laws of Indostan then prevalent he observes that 'A government depending upon no other principle than the will of one, cannot be supposed to admit any absolute laws into its constitution; for these would interfere with that will. There are no digests or codes of laws existing in Indostan; the Tartars who conquered this country could scarcely read or write; and when they found it impossible to convert them to Mahomedanism left the Gentoos at liberty to follow their own religion (. 437).' Regarding the knowledge that he had gained about India he makes it clear that 'A detail of these customs and policies is not to be expected. A whole life spent in such inquiries, would at the end remain ignorant of the hundredth part of them: every province has fifty sects of Gentoos; and every sect adheres to different observances' (. 437). Consequently, his viewing India as a country is merely a descriptive nomenclature to distinguish it from a broader geographical region. 'Europeans understand by the East Indies, all the countries and empires, which laying to the south of Tartary extend from the eastern frontiers of Persia to the eastern coasts of China. . . . The dominion of the Great Mogul, to which the name of India can only with propriety be applied, are designated in Asia as well as in Europe, by the Kingdom of Indostan; and although the Moguls are not masters of all

countries . . . yet there are very few tracts which have not formerly been, or which are not at present, subject or tributary to Mahomedans' (.457). To the early foreign visitors the term India did not signify a land of a specific nationality or one community but a geographical entity to separate from other parts of Asia. They were all aliens in an alien land, could see certain differences between broader communities but were satisfied till these groups could be treated as a unitary whole, labelled Indian, for their own convenience in understanding, in the same way as an average Indian fails to distinguish between an Italian from a Hungarian and is satisfied to give them all the label of European. Nevertheless the distinctions in the community structures remained.

The British like the Portuguese, Dutch and the French had come to India as traders. All of them had already come into contact with the country of Indostan in various ways, from petty merchants to ambassadors. Gradually they had obtained rights to establish on the soil their own trading centres in the coastal towns like Surat and Hooghly. In order to safeguard the moveable and immoveable property garrisons came to be established. With the owning of the landed property there naturally arose the question of holding the property, with force if necessary, and expand a little when there arose a tantalizing opportunity. Thus was created the germ-plasm of the future British empire. This period fortunately, for them, coincided with the anti-climax of the Moghul rule.

The social conditions which brewed the broth of Muslim downfall is yet to be assessed seriously. However there is a good deal of resemblance to the conditions that had led to the fall of the Roman empire. Every fresh campaign had brought to the Moghuls abounding wealth, extension of power and also innumerable slaves—slaves born as such, slaves made to order and slaves in the persons of noble men, courtesans and commoners. Prolonged despotism had sapped their vitality of will and organizing capacity so necessary to maintain a huge empire. They were given to indolence and luxurious living and had lost initiative. Life of the state lay in a moribund state. As Rawlinson has said, 'The condition of India in the 18th century was perhaps the unhappiest in the chequered history of the country'. The

rulers who ruled knew better to eat than to work, and they were all for tomorrow. But then history is made today.

'The soldiers', Clive wrote in 1758, 'if they deserve that name, have not the least attachment to their Prince, he only can expect service from them who pays them best, but it is a matter of great indifference to them' whom they serve.' Puffed with his initial success he bragged: 'I am fully persuaded that after the battle of Placis I could have appropriated the whole country to the Company and preserved it afterwards with as much ease as Meer Jaffier the present Subah now does, through the terror of the English arms and their influence' (55. 65). Thus spoke Robert Clive when the innocent trading community had taken to terrorizing and bullying, to political intrigues and military campaigns, to adventure and mad fun.

The British did not come to make India their homeland; yet they did not fashion themselves *à la* Ghazni or Ghorī. They stayed on to loot in their own way. Indigo plantation was only one of the many sources of revenues to the Company. Export of indigo from Calcutta rose from Rs. 50 lakhs in 1805-06 to Rs. 104 lakhs in 1807-08. It cost the planters Rs. 400 to produce a maund of indigo which was sold at London for over Rs. 2,100 (56). In course of time the field for plundering widened but the rulers to be were not unmindful of retaining their hold over the regions along with the expanding of their trade. Additionally, they fully exploited the benefits gained from the rising technological developments in their own country. Thus the spinning wheel and the handloom in India had to give way to the textile mills of Manchester, while Dundee and Glasgow thrived only because many an Indian sweated out to plant and produce jute in India. Import of English cloth into India rose from Rs. 1,50,000 in 1815 to Rs. 114,00,000 in 1824. The total import of goods into India rose from rupees seventy lakhs to rupees three crores and forty-seven lakhs between 1792 and 1822, that is five times, whereas the export during the same period had risen from two crores forty lakhs to four crores. In 1825-26 alone the Company had made a profit of one crore and eighty-one lakhs gained from trading in common salt. And, 'they came soon to discover how much more profitable sovereignty was than mere trade'. So they undertook to establish their sover-

eignty and employed means, both fair and foul, towards its expansion.

The British had no affinity with the inhabitants of the land here either in social, cultural or religious spheres. They had their own history and society, and, above all, laws of their own.

More than five hundred years before the battles of Plassey and Arcot it was laid down in the Magna Carta that 'No free-man shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or exiled or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him or send upon him except by the lawful judgement of his peers and the law of the land'. This however did not mean that the British rulers had any desire to introduce this grand law in their grand empire; empires are not built to offer the subjects liberty, equality and fraternity. In a much diluted form the Charter Act of 1833 was promulgated, and in 1858 Queen Victoria proclaimed: 'It is our further will that . . . our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely and impartially admitted to the office in our service, the duties for which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.' 'The Act itself was 'passed after discussion before empty benches and uninterested audience of the House of Commons and a less languid treatment by the House of Lords' (55).

This proclamation had naturally evoked mixed reaction in different regions of India. The Sikhs no doubt had serious grievances against the British. Even the conservative biographers of Lord Lawrence had to admit that here was a race of people 'to whom treachery and ingratitude are not naturally congenial'. The British proclamation offering equality of opportunity to serve the foreign queen could have only brought anguished sighs in the people of the Punjab. But the same could not be said of Bengal which was a vast tract of land covering the present states of Assam, Orissa, Bihar, U.P. and part of Punjab.

This Suba was far away from Delhi and therefore very much at the mercy of the local despots if despots possessed such a virtue. A considerable number of persons of the lower class had abandoned Hindu religion to get relief from the agony of perpetual tyranny under the local nawabs. Seldom anywhere in India political conditions had deteriorated so much as the case was in Bengal during the decline of the Moghul empire. Further facts

will be presented in the next chapter to explain why the presence of the British here was accepted with less ill feelings.

The picture in Maharashtra was again different. In 1817 Munro wrote to the Governor-General that 'all the trading classes are anxious for the expulsion of the Maharattas, because they interrupt their trade by arbitrary exactions, and often plunder them of their whole property' (57. 14). Munro claimed that at least nine-tenths of the villagers were in favour of the British. Robertson, who was now in charge of the Collectorate—and whose mission was 'to bring under British authority as much territory as he could'—believed that the attitude of the people in general was strong against the British when Poona was first occupied. As this biographer views, 'This later developed into a cautious neutrality. But as soon as they realized that their city would never come again under the rule of Baji Rao, the inhabitants seemed less anxious to hide their willingness to collaborate with the new government'. Robertson wrote: 'Some of the most respectable and sensible members of the community visited me in the day time instead of as formerly during the night' (. 13). \*

It would be presumptuous to attempt here any review, however limited, of the impact of the early British rule on the minds of the Indian people. In a very cryptic way it may be observed that wherever the subjects had suffered owing to the misrule of the past government or where one stratum of the society had received inhuman treatment from the hands of another, the people showed a desire to co-operate with the new government. At other places the petty rulers wanted to make use of the growing power of the British to settle their old scores with their erstwhile adversaries or neighbours thereby giving the British an opportunity to expand a little more. In the regions where co-operation was not forthcoming the British obtained it under threat and intimidation, through campaigns and expeditions immensely aided by their superior fire power.

Once they had established themselves they had to turn their thought to devising ways and means of staying for good. In this matter they had ample opportunities of guidance by avoiding errors committed in the past. As Machiavelli had said there are three courses to govern the newly acquired principalities. The first is to ruin the country, the next is to reside there in

mullahs India could never hope to compete with the west. Initiative also came unexpectedly from some other sources like the missionaries who were definitely disliked by the Company and by the early Imperial Government.

Even though the first printing press set up in India was in 1556 and types were available to print Tamil script as early as in 1578 (60) not much use of the press appears to have been made before that zealous Baptist missionary William Carey, who was possessed with the intense desire to spread the gospels, appeared on the scene. Between 1801 and 1822 he had translated and printed various Christian religious tracts in as many as thirty Indian languages. The printing press in India forced breaches in the wall that stood between ignorance and confidence. Looking retrospectively it may not be too much to suggest that the press gave a blow to the monopoly of the Brahmans in learning, perhaps more than that, it provided opportunities to read and think for himself to a man of any caste and creed or social status. In other words, doubts and conflicts, which are at the bases of all knowledge, now became possibilities replacing submission and acquiescence. The advent of printing press in India was impregnated with revolutionary possibilities even though it took long to achieve the ends. India certainly is indebted to men like William Carey, and David Hare.

#### I V

There are many factors which contribute to the building of social ties between the communities inhabiting far-flung regions of a country. Means of communication like the railway and telegraph, a common educational programme, etc. are some of the factors. Establishment of common law is yet another, perhaps more potent than any other single factor. Legal and administrative systems affected each and every person in the land whereas the other social institutions and instruments affected a comparatively limited number of people. Besides, its psychological impact on the Indian mind must have been of great magnitude. The common man came into the picture with the establishment of the common laws. The legal system which was to be the guiding force behind the administrative system was not to make distinctions between the *varnas* or religions but

was to be based on certain objective concepts of crime. This however should not be regarded as ushering of *Ram-rajya* but the psychological impact of the concept of equality in the eyes of law, at least in theory, must have been considerable.

In matters legal, the pre-British period offers two different pictures. The civil cases were tried by pundits and kazis who were assisted by the 'Hindu and Muslim interpreters of law as laid down in the Quran and the Shasters.' On the whole the system worked satisfactorily and disputes in interpreting law were not many.

It was however in the field of crimes that the Hindu and Mohammedan Laws suffered from grave shortcomings. It was not only that the principle of equity in administering justice was not given due recognition but the administrators of justice were given uncanny power of discretion and punishment which were sometimes barbarous by modern standards. To take a few examples, evidence of the infidels according to Muslim laws could not be used to convict a Muslim. 'In other cases a Mohammedan's word was regarded as being equivalent to that of two Hindus. The evidence of two women was regarded as been equal to that one man' (61).

In the absence of any objective concept of justice the courts turned into instruments of power rather than avenues for administering judicial relief. The objectives before the judge were not the suppression of crime but the redressing of grievances and therefore principles of retaliation or *kisa* formed a part of the judiciary system. Murder *per se* was no crime unless someone turned to the court for the offence committed and then the incident was treated as a private grievance. It was not the intention of murder which was of significance but how it was committed. The aggrieved party could obtain relief in the shape of blood-money or *diya*. As a result of this rule 'Brahmin murderers often escaped penalty for committing murder of a Hindu. The Hindu relations of the deceased did not demand *kisa* as they did not wish to incur the *supposed* guilt of exacting the capital punishment of a Brahmin.' Again, 'The Quran had made no provisions for the punishment of a murderer whose victim died without heirs' (61).

• Much light is thrown on the nature of the existing human relationship through the legal jurisprudence. Parents and

grandparents were immune from punishment if they killed their children and grandchildren since the latter were in the nature of mobile property. For not dissimilar reasons a man could murder a person attempting to rape his wife since this was like defiling one's property.

The nature of punishment was curious if not incongruous and hideous. The offender in the case of illicit intercourse was liable to be stoned to death, thieves found guilty could be punished by amputating their hands and/or legs, and a person could be scourged for laying false accusations of adultery against a married woman. As Arthur Keith has remarked, 'The forms of justice thus existed, but it is clear that the courts were the instruments of power rather than of justice, useless as a means of protection, but apt instruments for oppression' \* (. 63).

Hindu criminal law was in no better state. The 'Code of the Gentoo Laws' had come into existence at the behest of Warren Hastings and compiled by certain pundits in Bengal. Let it be remembered that the Hindu criminal law was replaced by Muslim laws and the Gentoos Laws constituted an effort for Hindu revivalism plus the atrocious ideas contained in the Muslim laws. Some of the strange features introduced into this system may be quoted here. 'If a man strikes a Bramin with his hand, the Magistrate shall cut off that man's hand. . . . If a Magistrate has committed a crime and any person upon discovery of that crime should beat and ill-use the Magistrate, in that case whatever the crime of murdering one hundred Bramins such crimes shall be accounted to that person; and the Magistrate shall thrust an iron spit through him and roast him at the fire. . . . If a Sooder sits upon the carpet of a Bramin in that case the Magistrate having thrust a hot iron into his buttock . . . shall banish him from the kingdom or else he shall cut off his buttock. If a man sells silver or any other article made to counterfeit gold, the Magistrate shall break his hand, nose and teeth . . . if he is constantly guilty of such practices the Magistrate shall cut him into pieces with a razor' (62, 190). These laws existed in the late eighteenth century. Laws prevalent in the Maratha country were not dissimilar. 'Murder unless attended by peculiar atro-

\* The expression *kajir vichar* (kazi's verdict) still finds place in Bengali vocabulary and is a synonym for incongruous and arbitrary judgement.



city appears never to have been capital, and was usually punished by fine. Highway robbery was generally punished with death because it was generally committed by low people, for a greater distinction was made in the punishment on account of the caste of the criminal than the nature of the crime' (. 194).

Evolution of the common law in India, introduced in Hastings' time, is yet to be compiled. But it cannot be denied that the introduction of a new system of jurisprudence had created a tremendous impact on the minds of the people. It does not mean that all the absurdities and ambiguities in the legal system were removed by introducing certain concepts of British law in India, it could not be; changes in the legal system are introduced by virtue of certain necessities in the existing society and dictated by more than one reason. The laws and tenets of the 'Muhammedans and Gentoos', continued to remain for long in the absence of suitable judges acquainted with the language, custom and manners of the land, and abrupt changes were deferred lest they disturbed the centrifugal forces from being generated. The Sutti was forbidden by the Government in Madras in 1680 whereas even in 1813 Hastings refused to abolish Sutti in Bengal, he was not desirous of hastening the backroad to Europe.

The enactment and establishment of a law merely serves the purpose of a milestone and acts as an indicator, and is therefore risky to project in it any further interpretation without making a thorough analysis. Laying down of a law may not only terminate issues which it represents as climax but may also germinate afresh a few.

Enunciation of a penal law, more particularly the achieving of the end results, depends on a number of factors chief of which is the authority behind it. This, again, is derived from the concurrence of a majority or even a strong minority of the people for whom it may have been designed and, also, the power behind the promulgators of the law. Success of the law also depends upon the social heritage of the people concerned, the motive behind the law and its acceptance, the prevailing mood of the people and so on.

A question that may be raised here is to what extent the laws promulgated during the period of Warren Hastings and subsequent Governor-Generals could have brought about a sense of homogeneity in the people. Could it be held that the laws per-

taining to the administration and judiciary substantially contributed towards the growth of the Indianhood?

As early as in 1797 the British Parliament had enacted that the Governor General in Council at Fort William could exercise power independently and that the regulations so made would be binding on the courts in the mofussil areas. The rules were to be published in local language for acquainting the people with its provisions. In doing so the Parliament had in view the need of keeping the Government under control. This way a central authority in dispensing justice took shape, and this perhaps was the main advantage offered by the provisions of the Act. In matters criminal a unified code came to be followed disregarding caste, creed or sex and this certainly was a significant achievement if it were looked at against the conditions prevalent in the Muslim period which had extensively deteriorated during its end phase.

The Charter Act of 1833, passed by the Parliament, despite certain drawbacks 'created in the real sense an All India legislature having authority to make laws and regulations for all territories in the possession and under the Government of the Company at the time'. The greatest weakness of this Act was that the Directors of the Company could annul any law passed by the Governor General in Council. In civil cases involving succession, inheritance, marriage, etc., Hindu and Mohammedan Laws were to be applied to the two communities whereas in all other points the courts were to act according to justice, equity and good conscience, and this norm continues to be employed even today.

The Law Commissions later had to codify suitable rules for a host of communities besides the Hindus and Muslims, like Armenians and Parsees, French and Portuguese, etc. It would however be incorrect to say that the laws and regulations were enacted with the benign motive of bringing a sense of unity among the people; the events in 1857 had made it clear that the charity at home could not be exported. The process of codification of laws had evolved to suit the convenience of the administrators. For instance, according to the prevailing laws of conversion, property of the convert stood forfeited; in 1832 this law was abolished not on grounds of equity but owing to the fact that the Christian missionaries faced thereby a severe

obstacle. People hesitated to embrace Christianity for the fear of losing their property from inheriting. Again, Her Majesty, though had offered the unique freedom of serving her Government, the freedom ended at the £500-a-year level and no Indian could aspire to go beyond.

About the imposition and acceptance of the English language so much has been, and being, said and written that it would prove irksome to bring the issue here.

Retrospectively, it may now be summarized that the British administrative machinery operated with the end in view of consolidating their hold over India; in order to give a shape of orderliness and decorum in their administration they followed certain paths which ultimately resulted in the unification of the people, but this unification came out as a by-product, there was no deliberation behind the acts.

Words like unity or unification are interesting in a sense since these are qualifying terms without conveying much meaning. When we say that two nationalities or countries are united we seldom pause to inquire: united in what respect? That this question is not irrelevant may be witnessed from the disunited United Nations Organization. Communities like nationalities or different ethnic groups can work together, or can be made to work together on the basis of certain selected principles. Two groups of people may bear radically different outlooks in social matters and yet may forge a united front on a political issue, this again may be for a specific period. If it were needed to analyze those forces which made the different communities tend to be united, coming closer together, and which in the pre-British period had remained disjointed, it should not be difficult to isolate those factors. After all unity must be felt and experienced by the members residing within the group unless it were forced to be united; the sense of unity is essentially a private experience.

The psychological experience which accompanies rights, as in our Constitution, has not received due emphasis but undeniably it has opened up a vast fund of repressed energy. One may not use his rights yet when it is curtailed he feels the absence, like his teeth. In a democratic society people are tempted to parade their pride in rights though in actuality with the expansion of others' rights one's own individual rights are proportionately curtailed and this phenomenon we may see operating in times

of emergency. As a noted jurist has viewed, 'The dominant note of the social thought of our century is that individual freedom must not be equated with mere absence of restraint. . . . Real freedom is only possible in communities which provide genuine equality of access to its exercise' (63). It is only when the road to the accessibility is felt obstructed that there arise feelings of compulsion, and coercion.

The dominant political note in the British policy was to offer the accessibility in the law of equity though it was curtailed in many places. The rights of a Sudra to bring a Brahman to the dock, to compel a Muslim to accept the affidavit of a Hindu, to permit women to be treated at par with men acted like taking the lid off the boiling pot. That a man could now sue his socially superior for damage in a court in the distant Malabar as in the hills of Assam, was certainly a psychological force to be reckoned with. These people did not know each other but knew of each others' rights, they had as much the feeling of assurance that these rights could not be tarnished. It was with reference to these rights that there grew a sense of unification.\*

Secondly, emergence of state in itself was a novel feature in the social panorama. The Government no doubt ruled in the name of a certain king in the distant land, but then the good king had very limited powers in his own native country, yet his emblem was respected, the crown was an institution. 'The State', as Sapru has pointed out, 'itself is distinguishable from other forms of human association by the power it possesses to compel, through the use of physical force, sanctioned by law, the obedience of the people in the territory over which it operates'. This state was not a man, not a community, at any rate theoretically. The forces behind unification therefore streamed out of the various legal, and not socio-cultural, channels.

\* 'In those parts of the country which are under the rule of the native princes, Brahmins forbid any one of another caste to approach their wells; but where Mahomedans are in power, and more particularly in the large towns under European rule, it is not unusual to see Brahmins, Sudras, and even Pariahs all drawing water from the same source' (33. 187).

## *Chapter 7*

### *THE SOCIAL FORCES*

CONTRADICTION WAS the hall-mark of the British rule in India, contradiction in formal declarations and informal assurances on the one hand and in observance of the principles laid down and actual conduct on the other. According to the Queen's proclamation as we have seen no distinction was to be made in caste and creed and all were to have equal rights in serving the government and yet a new caste was introduced indirectly, viz., the caste of the skin colour. It is interesting to notice that none of the visitors to India in the pre-British days ever referred to the distinction in human relations observed against the criterion of pigmentation of the skin. In the pre-British period there were multifarious ways of distinguishing man's social status but colour of the skin was never one of them; this was introduced by the British. This discrimination could not be attributed to the racial issue (as the European fascists did) since the Eurasians in India also were encouraged to maintain this discrimination whereas not all the native Christians were treated as Eurasians. In the Anglican churches seats were arranged in order of priority—men of European descent came first, the Anglo-Indian behind them, and the last seats were meant for the Christians with cutaneous pigments. Incidentally, the non-converts who willingly attended the church, as the present author did on several occasions to gain in social experience, were treated at par with the Europeans.

Indians could now enter the Civil Service and 'A few had accomplished the difficult feat of going to London and competing successfully in the examination, but even this avenue was practically closed by an order . . . which reduced the maximum

age of the candidates from twenty-one to nineteen years; in 1870 there were seven Indian candidates but in 1880 only two' (55. 537). Entry in the army at officers' posts was held as out of bounds. As Lord Lytton wrote to the Secretary of State, 'We all know that these claims and expectations (of equality of status) never can or will be fulfilled. We had the choice between prohibiting them, and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course' (64).

Burning of the Hindu widows was looked upon with horror as a barbarous practice and seldom an opportunity was lost to ventilate all over the world this tale of woe. Yet, 'Hastings (in 1813) refused to abolish suttee . . . ordering that a police officer must be present at a widow burning. This regulation was (thus) interpreted as giving official sanction to the cowardly and detestable rite' (55. 287). This matter of social reform was taken over in 1818 by Ram Mohan Roy and public agitation from a progressive section of the educated people led Bentinck to pass requisite regulation in 1829 to abolish this gruesome practice. In educational matters again similar contradictions were noticed in the means and ends. In the pre-British period education not only was severely restricted but it was designed to meet only the minimum needs of the time. The rural schools were good grounds for creating literates—though not open to all castes—and the classical education for the higher-ups in society could only meet the needs of the Brahman pundits and the Muslim kakis. Any broad-based policy to usher enlightenment to the masses of the people was beyond any possibility. But 'The idea that the Government should take an active part in the promotion of education was not accepted by all of Elphinstone's Colleagues', it eventually meant backroad to Europe. Here again the scholarly social workers had to fight relentlessly for the real benefits of education to be given to the larger number of population rather than preparing a few junior administrators. Despite opposition the Sanskrit College at Calcutta continued to maintain its old form. As Howell has said, 'It is one of the most unintelligible facts in the history of English education in India that at the very time when the natives themselves were crying out for instruction in European literature and science and were protesting against a continuance of the prevailing orientalism, a body of English Gentlemen appointed to initiate a system of

education for the country was found to insist upon the retention of oriental learning to the practical exclusion of European learning' \* (65). Further, each incoming Governor-General talked in a patronizing tone of his solemn determination to bring about economic prosperity in the country, yet each outgoing overlord left India poorer than it was before.

The Charter Act of 1833 gave the Governor-General in Council the right to enact laws for the land but the Directors were empowered to annul the laws, as later on Governor-General himself was empowered to veto the decisions of the Legislative Council. What the British gave with fanfare with the right hand took away quietly with the left hand, may be each time a little more. This perhaps was the natural outcome of the psychological process known as rationalization.

It is not always that we reason and then act; as we have seen before the process at times is reversed and we act first and then impose a reason over our action. The British had to rationalize for their action. Their initial interest lay not in conquering but in trading as merchants. Soon they found themselves in the vortex of a whirlpool of situations offering opportunities to go a step ahead, and a step further. By temperament the British are not impatient and acted like good chess players. A request for a factory site was followed by the rights to hold the land and expand it. Where the biblical charity failed to take effect bullet was pressed into service: have faith on God but keep the gunpowder dry was their maxim. However, in the long run this duality in policy was bound to have its repercussions. Let us

\* Western education was demanded not merely on grounds of securing jobs and for employment. Men who had the good of India at heart were eager to see that our talent flourished in the proper atmosphere, and talent there always was. As an experienced civilian has recorded 'It is now a trite observation that, upto a certain time of life, the Hindoo boys show greater cleverness and capacity than the Europeans of the same age. James Mill observes that "they display marvellous precocity in appreciating a metaphysical proposition which would hopelessly puzzle an English lad". This is a high praise as coming from the father and preceptor of John Stuart. . . . Their turn for mathematics is truly wonderful. A distinguished Cambridge wrangler assured me that the youths of eighteen and twenty, whom he was engaged in teaching, rushed through the course of subjects at such a headlong speed that, if they went on at the same rate, they would be in "Lunar Theory" by the end of six months' (66. 48).

see how these contradictions may have affected the social life in the country at large.

During the regime we notice two broad sets of psychosocial forces prevailing in the Indian social texture, and each of these forces had a different origin. As seen in the previous chapter the newly introduced administrative system had produced a recognizable social force of cohesion on the legalistic plane. The same administrative system had released unawares certain other forces which became responsible for ethnic dissemination, and this we shall examine in detail in the foregoing pages. Yet a third force began to germinate which brought the people on one plane of seemingly unity. But this third force bore no relationship with the aforementioned first social force. The third force took shape in its own way out of the motivations of an imperialistic power. Unlike the Moghuls and Pathans, the British were not keen on openly declaring their might-is-right policy; that would have appeared barbaric. They were however out to prove their superior culture and religion which were intended to benefit the backward Indians. But they were convinced that might is right and were not prepared to stand any nonsense. Thus arose the basic psychological conflicts in the British rule, the dichotomy in their words and deeds.

Sometimes administrative measures were introduced in a calculated manner with definite aims in view, more often the ensuing results of administrative actions deflected from the actual objectives, and proved contradictory in means and ends. The means of communication like the railways and telegraph, the administrative machinery using uniform language, the introduction of a body of common laws and all these and more gave a shape to unification which constituted the first force mentioned above. These measures however did not reflect any deliberate policy on the part of the rulers to bring about a cohesion in the inhabitants in this sub-continent, these were mere adjuncts for smooth administration. For similar reasons the country came to be divided into three presidencies. Haltingly these presidencies were subdivided, and the Presidency of Rengal was bifurcated into Punjab, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. Later Orissa grew into a separate province just as Sind was severed from the Bombay Presidency. Dividing the country into provinces for administrative reasons is a plausible excuse but the



underlying causative factors in such divisions of the regions was not always the same since a uniform policy was not observed in all cases; political considerations in this matter could not be ruled out. Efforts to partition Bengal, as was attempted by Curzon, and to amalgamate parts of Bengal with Assam and Bihar were aimed at thwarting the political aspirations in Bengal growing in intensity, and therefore it cannot be maintained that distribution of states was free from considerations other than merely administrative. It has also to be noticed that this demarcation very often coincided with the broad linguistic areas, at any rate this was somewhat obvious in northern India. In other regions, as the then Madras Presidency, demarcation based on language was not undertaken partly because of the reason that inner forces for division were not clearly evinced during this regime. Tamils by temperament are conformist and are not hasty in their actions, whereas in the region where the Telugus were predominant landed aristocracy wanted to be left alone to enjoy its wealth and they did not object to the generic name of Madras. In Maharashtra frustrations following the unfulfilment of Shivaji's dreams were to be the natural outcome. The picture of Bengal against this background looked quite different. What happened in Bengal during this period was to act like a mould for all other regions in India. Bengal was the headquarters of the new regime, politically, economically, historically and culturally. Consequently what happened in Bengal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was bound to have repercussions elsewhere in India. It is for this reason that a close-up review may be pursued here and in this hurried survey the broader trends alone will be considered leaving aside the details.

II

If there was one region in the 'East Indies' which was worth plundering it was the terrain called Gauda-Vanga which roughly covered Bengal and a little beyond in the British reign. It had diamond mines to exploit, was the only source in India which exported shellac and manufactured dyes, the land produced sugar and tobacco in abundance, fine qualities of cotton and silk cloth were woven and exported outside India (11 & 47). It was a haven for the merchants and traders, and a heaven for the free-

booters, and all made use of this land in their own ways. The Dutch, Portuguese, French and the British had all their turn. Accounts of the travellers who had visited this 'country' during the days of declining Moghul empire leave an impression that it was like a free port allowing free-for-all type of life there, the Hindus having the least say while the Muslims stood aside like forlorn and forgotten. The land lay far away from Delhi. As Orme has observed: 'Whoever considers the vast extent of the empire Indostan will easily conceive, that the influence of the emperor, however despotic, can but faintly reach those parts of his dominion which lay at the great distance from his capital. . . . The consequence of so large a dominion (as Bengal) at such a distance from the capital has been, that an active, wily prince, could overwhelm the empire itself' and that is what Allivardy Khan did. 'He is a great warrior, and has never paid the court any tribute. The Morattocs (Marathas) were sent as free-booters into his country, to divert him from attempting the throne itself' (54. 399). Social degeneration was no less. 'In 1817 there were 706 *suttees* in the Bengal Presidency. It is true that this insane practice is much more in vogue on the banks of the Ganges than anywhere else. In the south parts of the Peninsula of India *suttees* are seldom seen. I am convinced that in the Madras Presidency . . . not thirty widows allow themselves to be thus burnt during a year' (33. 357). There had returned little political stability when scare and panic became widespread owing to the cruel and horrifying invasion of Baji Rao and his gangster hordes (67). The crimes they perpetrated were not to be soon forgotten, the ghoulish days continue to be recalled in the Bengali lullabies and nursery rhymes even after two centuries. It is little wonder that the inhabitants of this Suba showed limited response in the politico-military uprising in 1857. It may be added that the advent of the British merchants had helped create a new aristocracy and the new bourgeoisie enjoyed fabulous wealth never dreamt of before. It was then not uncommon to spend a couple of lakhs of rupees in the 'marriage ceremony' of one's animal pet., or a million rupees over Durga Pooja. The lid was taken off the centuries-old conflicts, tension and frustration. The inhabitants of this Suba now felt relieved of the dread of the past and looked forward to better days.

There had been in existence centres of learning like Santipur

in Navadweep (Nadia), and these centres of learning functioned to keep the lamp lighted when nothing more could be done, and were to act like the beacon lights under more favourable circumstances. All over India these cultural centres have played their part in preserving and perpetuating the cultural norm of the region. In western India Paithan and Vai were such centres, Kanchi and Tanjore in the south, Patna and Deoband were centres of Islamic learning, and all these were potential sources of keeping alive what is now called regional cultures; nevertheless the total picture of religious and moral life in Bengal at the time of the advent of the British was dismal to say the least. Buddhism had degenerated into vulgar forms of Tantrism, and Vaishnavism harboured a good deal of loose living, by modern standards, and this need not surprise anyone. When the people have been ruled under oppressive forces for centuries they are liable to use political freedom for social anarchy and of this we have witnessed in the serious abrupt changes in social values in Germany immediately after the last two world wars. The half-educated Brahman purohits exploited the ignorance of the people and thrived on the social power and prestige they had accumulated over the centuries. What Dubois had observed of Brahmans elsewhere was also applicable to Bengal. 'Sometimes ordinary Brahmins pass themselves off as *purohits*, especially among the Sudras. . . . These interlopers are unacquainted with the formulas and correct *mantrams*, and so they mumble a few words of Sanskrit or some ridiculous and unintelligible sentences. But if the real *purohits*, who for self-interest are always on the alert, discover that their prerogatives have been invaded and their powers usurped, a violent quarrel ensues between them and their sacrilegious rivals' (33, 135). This had already contributed to the considerable conversion to Islam in the lower segments of the population and later helped Christianity obtain a foothold on the soil.

This is the background of Kalikata which rapidly transformed itself from a minor village to a rapid trading centre when landlords and zamindars began to migrate to Calcutta in order to earn without a ceiling and spend luxuriously. Land belonging to the nawabs, now severed from the influence of Delhi, changed hands fast and quite a few erstwhile Hindu *nayabs* grew into Rajahs. There also appeared a class of traders called

*banyan* who worked as agents to the foreign merchants and grew rich as quick as some of these merchants grew poor. While the zemindars spent on bonanza, and were frequently engaged in ostentatious display of wealth the *banyans* tried to consolidate their position by entering into the field of trade and commerce *à la Ingrej*. If the British could do, why not the Indians? This was the sort of question they asked themselves. But the English were not prepared to allow any inroads of competition in their monopoly, and quite a few Indian business houses came to grief. However it was this *banyan* class, influenced by the western culture, which was keenly desirous of introducing a new life into the local culture. Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarka Nath Tagore were *banyans*. The German proverb *Stadluft mach freit* (city air makes you feel free) was coming true.

With their patrons migrating to Calcutta many of the good pundits also were attracted to this town and thus Calcutta grew rich in wealth and learning and this too within a short period. Incidentally, this is one way how early Calcutta could be distinguished from Bombay in the contemporary period. Though Elphinstone was desirous of opening a school at Bombay he, as also his lieutenants, knew 'that orthodox Brahmans (of Poona) would be reluctant to go to Bombay', which proved true and Poona continued to remain the intellectual-cum-political centre while Bombay derived benefits of mercantile development.

Calcutta had money to spare for cultural activities, it was helped by a new class of people who were not anxious to preserve the influences of the past and impatiently looked ahead. Calcutta derived the benefits from the residence of reputed Brahman scholars, enjoyed early contact with the industrial civilization, and also received additional, though accidental, aids from the missionaries. The latter no doubt were imbued with proselytizing zeal but could not be considered as harbingers of the imperial power, as a matter of fact they were thoroughly disliked by the Company. Missionaries had not yet grown into symbols of imperialism and in the name of spreading Christ's message they had not yet started vitriolic and vulgar attacks on the religious faith of others. All these combined facilities offered favourable opportunities for a social change for the better and a shift was now to be expected from the morass of social

stagnation and degradation that had prevailed. The potential sources were available but these had to be properly exploited and for this purpose what was needed was conjoint efforts of a band of zealous persons with intellectual acumen and foresight. This did appear on the scene and the total effect thus produced is described as renaissance in Bengal.

When a series of progressive and elevating social processes, complementary to each other, are witnessed taking place within the folds of a community during a certain period it is described as renaissance or quasi-renaissance. This social event is often attributed to the chance appearance of a number of gifted individuals. If this explanation be accepted historical progress then would have to remain at the mercy of genetics. This sort of explanation is not complete. We learn from the laws of probability and genetics that we can reasonably expect a number of persons of high intelligence being born in any region within a period of time, say, a century. But gift of intelligence of itself is not a sufficiently impelling force to lead men towards massive or unified constructive activity; psychological *urge* for sustained action is an essential pre-requisite in this respect and this is provided by feelings and emotions which we have discussed elsewhere. Intellect, tinged with sustained upsurge of feelings, can alone give rise to creative activity. That the Bengalis are emotional by temperament even Huen-tsang had not failed to notice, and to this psychological propensity may be added certain historical conditions to obtain a clearer picture of the time.

Psychologists have not said the last word on the origin of feeling and emotion, but the strong influences originating in the environmental state cannot be denied. In this respect the past can contribute considerably towards the community's dynamic activities, and the past under certain circumstances can offer tremendous impetus.\* The history of Banga is old and its imagery could not be obliterated by the Moghul rule just as the imageries in the people of any other place like Maharashtra or Tamilnad

\* During the last war, when Stalingrad was undergoing strenuous days of siege of the town and there was a hairbreadth distance between spirit and demoralization, the authorities produced and distributed on a large scale brief biographies of the great men of the past who once lived in Russia. These were to supply answer to the query, 'what are we fighting for'. In doing so even Ivan the Terrible was portrayed as Ivan the Great!

was not obliterated. This bank-vault of imagery flung wide its closed doors as the Muslims began to lose their hold on the land. The men of intellect could now make use of their acumen fed by the emotion generated by the past imagery, more than that, they could now think in terms of future, of marching onwards. These were the causative factors which gave rise to the quasi-renaissance state in Bengal. This state of renaissance could not have originated in Maharashtra or in Tamilnad, and the reasons may be traced in the above. Maharashtra had its Shivaji, his absence could only raise imageries of the recent past in the people of Maharashtra and thus kindle the desire to go back, to attain what it had lost; that is why the spirit of revivalism grew stronger here. Besides, when the British came, the picture of the social conditions in Maharashtra was not as squalid and dismal as it was in the contemporary Bengal. Therefore the impetus-for progress could not be the same in both these regions. In Tamilnad the repressive forces of the Brahmans were much more intense compared to Bengal or Maharashtra and the Brahmans were narrow in their outlook. They failed to see the writing on the wall and apparently did not believe in the saying *ardhyang tyajatih panditah* (better give away half when giving is good), with the result that conversion to Christianity in the South gained in popularity.

Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chatterji, David Hare and Henry Vivian Derozio were all encompassed within a period of zeal and enthusiasm which had lain buried under the mire of the past. It was like rebuilding a town which lay destroyed by volcanic eruptions. They were eager to contribute their share to the progress of mankind. This they did perhaps for the whole of India—Ram Mohan's efforts for the abolition of the *sati* system and repeal of the Press Act were to affect the country at large—but then the vision of India was not as wide as we have it today; rapid means of transport today have shrunk the world everywhere. Ram Mohan's first tract on *sati* was naturally written in Bengali though it was intended to benefit the whole country. It is but natural that efforts of the social reformers were to remain limited within the community in which they were born whose cultural pattern they had grown accustomed to and the language that they spoke. What other medium Bankim

(1838-94) could have chosen to write in but Bengali? What language Kaliprasanna Sinha (1840-70) could have adopted to translate Mahabharata? Was the book not to be read by the people of his community with whom he was immediately concerned? To introduce widow re-marriage Iswar Chandra (1820-1891) had to write copiously and to whom could he have addressed but to the men of his community with whom he was acquainted since his childhood? Michael Madhu Sudan Dutta (1824-1873) in the early part of his career was enraptured by the language and culture of the English, and hated Hindu religion, its customs, manners and Bengali literature in a way surpassing Englishmen hating Indians. Son of a renown zemindar family he embraced Christianity and launched upon his literary career writing only in English. But then he was the first innovator of the blank verse style in an Indian language and his epics in Bengali based on *pauranik* themes remain classic.

What happened in Bengal during this period may be described as psychological rebirth of a community. Those who had occupied the upper rungs of the social ladder, the newly created bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, now could feel the opportunities for giving a shape to their natural aspirations. These people, as others elsewhere in India, were not devoid of cultural heritage but were denied during the Muslim rule facilities for its development. They had their own language with a history of a thousand years behind it, but it had received no impetus for improvement since a tongue alien to them was given importance. The social fabric was left perforce in a docile moribund state; if the Brahmans had held a monopoly over learning and over Hindu religion and had held sway over those who called themselves Hindus, the Muslims had treated all the non-Hindus in a not dissimilar manner. This brutal coercion had held down a huge potential force of natural yearnings and aspirations from expression; whereas to become known is a common psychological expectation in a community. The potentialities began to be manifested in its kinetic form once the rudimentary facilities were made available by the newly created law and administration. The common law now had lifted the sluices of a dam. The reaction in the upsurge and expression of pent up feelings was perhaps in proportion to the active repression of the past.

This feeling was expressed through manifold channels and with the advent of the printing press more was written for many more readers. The press fed the hunger for knowledge and for learning—even people of the lower middle class had now books of their own, an unheard of acquisition. The newly developing prose forms had quicker grasping and absorptive power than the archaic poetry in which the previous literature used to be composed. Since the contents of literature were meant for the masses of the people of a particular region, it was natural that the language of the people was used.\* They spoke of their past glory, of whatever value it may have been, and expressed their future ambitions. In this way the cultural means and contents of culture helped each other and grew rapidly. *Kirtan* and *baul* songs were composed which had immense appeal for the masses and were sung by the people everywhere; dramas were written and played in the native style, poetic competitions were held and all these contributed towards the consolidation and rapid development of the local culture and thereby strengthened and consolidated local imagery. Leaders in the field of socio-cultural upliftment were not out of touch with the world outside. Ram Mohan Roy was much influenced by the French Revolution, Madhu Sudan Dutta picked up the best of the western culture. Henry Vivian Derozio, of Indo-Portuguese parentage, wrote:

My country! in thy day of glory past  
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,  
And worshipped as a deity thou wast,  
Where is the glory, where the reverence now?

My country! He was speaking of India no doubt. Men like Ram Mohan and Keshab Sen, Dutta and Derozio talked in

\* Among the earliest of the printed books since the first press was established by missionary Carey, Bible came first (1801), followed by *Raja Pratapaditya Charita* (1801), *Mahabharata* in Bengali (1802), *Ramayana* (1802), *Tota Itihasa* (1805). It may be noticed here that emphasis was on the publication of religious books now written in Bengali, reducing thereby the monopoly of the Brahmans, and which were composed in a language which the common man could understand. Emphasis subsequently shifted to historical drama which stood for unearthing the past that had remained, suppressed.



terms of India nonetheless each experienced India through the realities and imageries of his immediate neighbourhood. To expect them to have acted otherwise would have been a psychologically absurd expectation.

In this cultural milieu there grew a map of Bengal which was not drawn with lines but was a human cultural map based on songs and drama, prose and poetry, art and music, customs and manners. No doubt the authors derived nourishment from central themes like the puranas but these were viewed in the local light, just as a Tamil or Punjabi would fail to appreciate fully if these narratives were devoid of their local imagery. *With the enrichment of the culture content and development in the cultural means this cultural map grew in distinction from the cultural maps of the adjacent areas.* The province and its people now came to be clearly identified as different from other states. Thus also grew the diversified ethnic groups mentioned earlier as the second type of social force liberated by the advent of the British.

It is exactly this psychosocial process which was repeated elsewhere in India. What happened in Bengal was bound to happen elsewhere, rapidly or at a retarded pace, with vigour or without, but psychologically this process was inevitable, its logic inescapable. This however is not meant to convey that Bengal had taken up a sort of cultural leadership while other provinces merely imitated what had been originally initiated in Bengal, that would be an unscientific interpretation. The ethnic transfiguration that was later witnessed all over India was a culmination of historical events similar to what had happened in Bengal. This compulsion had to take recourse to the same mode of cultural development as had happened in Bengal, there was no other alternative. It is true that Bengal was the first province to wake up under the inspiration of the great personalities there, but what had happened in this eastern province was bound to be repeated in the west and the north and the south.

It may not be denied that the modern Indian literature in the various languages was given a fillip by the decline of the Muslim domination and indirectly benefited by the advent of the British; at any rate coincidental facts can hardly be overlooked since we find all the modern Indian languages taking a new turn at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the

initial stage the literary production in each language was mainly based on the epics and puranas. Gradually it began to depict the life of the people, the people amidst which the authors lived. Translation of the foreign authors, particularly the works of English dramatists and poets, helped to bring about a change in the outlook and the themes began to shift from the Indian classics. Copious translation of Bankim in several Indian languages arose from the same need. Indian stories, which had their origin in the puranic literature, were retold in the various languages in this country and each time it was told it was portrayed in the local atmosphere. The story of *Sati and Behula* in Bengali is often paraded as its 'very own' specimen of literature; the same expression is repeated about this *upakhyan* written in Assamese language, and Marathi language.\* Actually this legend originated from Padma-Purana which is not the monopoly of any particular region in India. Resources for producing modern literature no doubt were culled from certain broad central themes; just as the stories related to Zeus in Greek literature have been told and retold in many modern European languages, but the compositions made full use of local atmosphere and colour for popular comprehension and appreciation. However, the requisite medium was provided by the customs and manners of the region, by its idioms and proverbs to suit the regional needs.

The rapid development of the modern Indian languages may be ascribed to two main factors. As it has been mentioned earlier, import of printing machinery had made large contributions in this respect. The presses were acquired mostly by the efforts of the missionaries who were eager to publish gospels in the different languages to be distributed among the natives in different regions in India. The missionaries at Scrampoore published between 1801 and 1822 the gospels in as many as thirty-seven languages as far-flung as Kanarese and Sanskrit, Oodeypoori and Dongri. At their initiative quite a few Grammars also were composed; they undertook this task because of the necessity of translating their religious tracts in these languages. Thus scribing on palm leaf with iron stylus ceased to be the laborious

\* Professor Dines Sen has made a reference to half a dozen districts in Bengal claiming the birth place of Lakhindar the hero of the story!

instruments of social communication giving way to speed and wide dissemination of knowledge. Another reason for the rapid growth and development of the modern Indian languages was the non-interfering attitude of the rulers. Their administration was in no way affected by the regional languages since English commanded the status of official language. As Bentinck had commented, 'we understand very imperfectly their language. They perhaps know more of ours'. However this disinterested attitude resulted as blessings in disguise. All the languages were treated at par and they were permitted to develop, as also the allied culture, without any hindrance. In this way the government remained aloof from any involvement, the façade was of fairness and impartiality; actually however the foreigners disregarded the existence of the Indian languages with an unconcealed air of derision and contempt.

From now onwards the Indians were to be tied down to multiple imageries: there could be *no Indian imagery*. The common man spoke in the language of his community loaded with the local idioms and expressions creating thereby a gradual deviation from its neighbouring language, folk tales and folk lores—even though originating from a few main sources—bore local norms, and there developed provincial standards in customs and social codes, and he learnt to call himself a Tamil or Gujrati, Malaylee or Marwari, but never Indian. It may be mentioned here that a considerable number of people had migrated to Bengal from different parts of India. Jagath Seth had migrated from Marwar and made Murshidabad his homeland during the Muslim rule and his descendants today are as much Bengalis as any other. Gradually they accepted every aspect of Bengali life including language and manners; they lived as other Bengalis lived and their origin is now forgotten. None cares to recall from where the Naths and Singh Roys had originally come. Few Bengalis are aware of the original home of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, but recall with respect of his conspicuous contributions to the Bengali literature. Likewise we find that the Nathjis in Gujarat had hailed from Varanasi. Quite a few Tamils have enriched Malayali literature and culture, and this all does not denote anything new. What is of significance here is that the people *must belong either to one cultural-lingual community or another*, changing of a culture or language does not lead to

Indianization. To expect a person to think of himself as Indian first is possible only in the politico-legal sense not in the socio-cultural sense. One can speak and think, act and imagine only in accordance with the habits inculcated in him at his early childhood days, he cannot help it.\*

Thus we see that uniformity in legal customs was inductive to political unification whereas cultural developments led to the creation of multiple ethnical groups.

### III

Here we shall have occasions to see the third social force, mentioned before, taking shape and which after a couple of centuries of British rule in India was to bring broad masses of people closer together albeit on a different plane. This force was generated not through legal means and it had little bearing on the culture of the people; at its base were the feelings of pang, agony of humiliation, crude and cruel exploitation of man by man leading to frustration and then action.

The picture of the eighteenth-century India is portrayed by Adams in a clear and simple language: 'The hoards, the savings of millions of human beings for centuries, the English seized and took to London, as the Romans had taken the spoils of Greece and Pontus to Italy. What the value of the treasure was, no man can estimate but it must have been many millions of pounds—a vast sum in proportion to the stock of the precious metals then owned by Europeans' (68).

Describing the state of affairs in the nineteenth century John Shore, who had spent years in India as a judge of civil courts, has recorded in his memoirs: 'It was observed that young men of humble, or, at best, moderate abilities, possessed of little interest . . . embarked for India, and, after a residence there for

\* The present author was happy indeed when he came across two books on Indian culture with the belief that these could be used as source books. One of these is *South Indian Customs* written by P. Ayyar (1925) and the other *The Hindoos as They Are* by S. Bose (1831). To his dismay he found that the first book dealt with Tamil customs and the second was limited to the Bengali customs. Looking psychologically, to one of the authors the land of the Tamils was to be construed as *South India* and to the other, Bengali customs and manners could legitimately claim the whole of India!

a few years, returned home with large sums of money. . . . But the halcyon days of India are over; she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed, and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few' (69. 28). On his arrival in India Shore like others shared the conviction that 'existed in the minds of the English population, of the blessings conferred on the natives of India by the establishment of the English rule', and believed like others of his country 'even the most intelligent native to be inferior to an Englishman though his education had been on the lowest possible scale'. But in course of time he was to change his mind: 'From the intercourse which thus took place, I was enabled to perceive the errors and absurdity of my former notions. . . . I soon found myself at no loss to understand the feelings of the people both towards our government and to ourselves. It would have been astonishing indeed, had it been otherwise. The fundamental principle of the English had been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, to the interests and benefits of themselves. They have been taxed to the utmost limit; every successive province, as it has fallen into our possession, has been made a field for higher exaction. . . . The Indians have been excluded from every honour, dignity or office, which the lowest Englishman could be prevailed upon to accept, while our public offices, and as we are pleased to call them, courts of justice, have been sinks of every species of villany, fraud, chicane, oppression, and injustice. . . . It is to little purpose that we boast of our honesty and good intentions, and lay the blame of the existing evils upon our native subordinates; the authors of a system which produces such evils are the real offenders' (. 518, 9).

But then Shores and Adams were few and far between and the masters did not shake off their attitudes.

Hatred is like fire—it burns even rubbish deadly. And the fire simmered under the feeling of know-not-what-to-do. At times they knew what to do and then did it without training, without lead, and with little power and with hardly any organization to back them.

The roaming Sanyasis whom Hastings called the 'Gipsies of Hindustan' fought the British under Shuja-ud-Daula in 1764

and on more than one occasion they fought pitched battles against the foreign army.

In 1856 the Santhals in Bengal and Bihar revolted against the Hindu usurers who made serfs of these simple-hearted, unsophisticated inhabitants. In the name of law and order the British bravely came forward in defence of the moneylenders. What followed was a barbaric massacre of the Santhals, burning their wretched huts and destroying the standing crops with elephants.

In 1857 if Nana Farnavis and Kunwar Singh, Rani of Jhansi and Bahadur Khan wanted to regain their states annexed on one pretext or another, the authorities to be were not in a mood to understand the rule-or-three of justice. The situation that subsequently arose 'gave almost religious sanction to any act of savagery which the government troops might perpetrate. Towns-men were slaughtered wholesale at Cawnpore and later at Lucknow and Delhi' (55).

Not much is recalled of the revolt of the peasants against the indigo planters in Bengal (1859-60). A peasant who accepted the advance money for selling indigo to the *kuthiyal* (factory man) accepted at low price serfdom for himself and his descendants. In sheer desperation the peasants revolted and the planters in a body had to flee the rural areas to seek shelter in the fort at Calcutta.

The *wahabis* were a Muslim sect described as puritan and obscurantist. They had allied themselves in 1857 on the right side and waged battles intermittently till 1871. It may be recalled that Lord Mayo was assassinated in 1873 by a *wahabi* after his release from Andaman where he was transported for his part in the *wahabi* movement. Earlier Lord Ellenborough had written to London (1843), 'I cannot close my eyes to the belief that race (Muslim) is fundamentally hostile to us, and our true policy is to reconcile the Hindu'. An opposite policy was to be introduced later when the Hindus grew vociferous.

These meagre facts are used here not to recapitulate history but as supporting evidence to the fact of political force generating and growing in the country against the foreign rule. In matters of administration as also in exploitation the rulers made no distinction in caste, creed or culture. No matter how well educated or cultured an Indian was he could never aspire equal-

ity with the British, the skin caste was an irremovable barrier and this gave rise to a serious source of psychological conflict. It was on this main plank of general grievances that the Indians could unite, and they did. No doubt every effort was made by the rulers to bring about division and schism among the aspiring people but the broad pattern of feeling that emerged was the passionate desire to overthrow the government. Since all had their grievances of one kind or another the joint target was to remove this pernicious foe. As explained elsewhere when a threat is experienced by a community the members tend to forget their differences and are drawn closer together against the common criterion of unity. It did not thereby mean that all the distinctive features were banished from the mind for all time, they were at best kept in abeyance, perhaps in a dormant state. This phenomenon of psychological unity should be clearly distinguished from the type of unity that is deliberately planned at times as at the elections when opposing political parties work hands in glove and sometimes give a semblance of queer bed-fellows. Anyway, history abounds with evidence of unity growing against common enemy. The crusades launched to gain the holy sepulchre had for some time brought to a halt the enmity between the Latin and Greek Churches. The old conflict between the Marathas and Moghuls ceased when they jointly stood against the threat created by the impending rule of the British.

The caste of skin colour was introduced by the British and of this we can have a better grasp from the following extract of a military officer. Writing home to his son Briggs said, 'there is another feeling which, in India, tends to create a contempt towards the natives, and however absurd the notion, it is nevertheless true, that their dark complexions convey to the mind of an European a sensation of inferiority. . . . This prejudice, so commonly prevalent among the Europeans towards all dark men, makes us too apt to identify fairness of complexion with intellectual power and civilization, and to associate with the term "black men" the idea of barbarism and brutality' (70). Briggs has no doubt thoroughly deprecated this attitude, nonetheless the fact remains that a new source of social conflict in India was introduced in the shape of a black and white relationship, and this caused interesting repercussions in politics.

In the eyes of the Indian people the world had come to be sharply divided between people with white skin and people of any other complexion but white. Japan's victory (1905) over Russian invasion was interpreted as a victory of the Asiatics, and since India was a part of Asia and the Russians were equated with the British in skin caste, it was held almost an Indian victory over the British! What is amusing is that the Japanese never held any feather feeling for the Indian; since it had an Emperor of its own and also an empire Japan put herself at par with other imperial powers. Again, the Turk's throwing out the Greeks in 1923 was looked upon with great admiration and enthusiasm by the Indian people. The old hatred against Turks was forgotten. On similar grounds Indians expressed their manifest alliance with the African people in the pre-1947 period and this continues to be maintained. Let it be repeated that the ethics in such affinities, its judiciousness or validity is not questioned here. In stating these facts the author has only one objective in view, viz., to explain how social affinities may grow, since this fact has important bearing on the subject under discussion.

How the third line of force culminated in 1947 is a matter of contemporary history.

#### I V

Out of the three sets of forces mentioned above the first one, viz., growing semblance of unification brought about by legal changes during the past regime is widely recognized. The second social force was responsible for giving each ethnic group its own contour and shape. The third force acted in creating a homogeneity that grew out of common sufferance and sorrows; origin of this psychosocial force lay in the common desire of overthrowing the existing government. It is also this fact which has often been misinterpreted. Each time a political movement that was launched received ready response from the people in the different provinces it was presumed that the ethnological differences that these people bore were superficial and had no depth in the mind of the people. The natural reaction to this view was to ignore the distinctions. Also, it was believed that these differences arose out of the mechanization of the ruling class and



would automatically disappear with the attainment of freedom. The consensus of opinion was that the sharp edges and juts of the community expressions will in time be sawed and filed, and the thorns and twigs when pruned there would then emerge an evenness of the largest denominator which will be Indian. This kind of insipid, sentimental approach has not yet been discarded. 'The freedom movement did much to bring together people from all parts of the country under a single banner. It opened up opportunities for forging inter-provincial friendships and overcoming, in some manner, the prejudices which have been growing up. In recent years, however, there has been some sliding back' and on goes the lamentation (3. 24). People no doubt had fought under one banner but that banner had nothing to do with the ways of living and thinking prevalent in the different ethnic groups; the latter continued to flow in divergent channels. Besides, the freedom movement had no tags of benefits attached to it, not at any rate at that stage. The people were bound together under a common idealism which brought nothing but pain and anguish to those who had dared to assemble under the banner. It was this common idealism which is often misinterpreted as commonality in culture and interest.

What appears to be rather striking is that the second force, responsible for ethnological distinctions, has received the least recognition. As a matter of fact it was never considered a serious issue for proper scrutiny. The superficial expressions of cultural disparity no doubt were observed but were overlooked on pragmatic grounds with the result that the subterraneous existence of the force never attracted serious attention, it was neglected and of this we get a hint from the Preamble of the Constitution. The Constitution of India opens with the solemn declaration:

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economical and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity. . . .

- It may be noticed that there are two expressions in this memorable sentence which though bear different connotations have been

used as synonymous terms. The word *people* signifies the inhabitants who may or may not bear different ethnic features, whereas the term *citizen* is purely a legal term, it defies ethnological difference, and on logical grounds these could not be treated as the same. The *people* might vary in customs and manners, religion and language but when it comes to their demanding social equality they can do so on the rights conferred on them.

The introduction of the legal term *citizen* leaves no room for doubt regarding the status of the man owing allegiance to the state; it bears a more potent force than the word *nationality*. However the word *people* leaves grounds for interpretation. The makers of the Constitution evidently were not prepared to attach any importance to the psychosocial distinctions in the different ethnic groups. Maybe that was not the opportune moment for raising this issue which could have let loose unpredictable forces. Nevertheless there are grounds left for serious thinking.

If the word *people* could have overruled the ethnological distinctions, and this may be presumed since there is no indication contrary to this in the Constitution, then justification for reorganizing the country on linguistic basis can be put to question. In dismissing the group distinctions against language and culture to demarcate the states against these criteria appears to be a case of self-contradiction. In this respect the Report of the States Reorganization Commission has refuted the affirmation of the leader of the House in the Parliament who had said that the S.R.C. was set up only on administrative grounds. The Commission itself has something different to say and a few quotations may make its position clear. It admits that 'in the past India did not achieve a real measure of political unification or develop into a living body, social or political, constituting an integrated whole' (pp. 30-31). This is partially true, as discounting the Indian states, the country had achieved political unity as never before, though cultural homogeneity was not there, neither it is today.

However the S.R.C. had clearly warned that 'it will be unrealistic to disregard the patent fact that there are in India different cultural units'. In stating the Rationale of Reorganiza-

tion, the Committee has clearly expressed: 'When progressive public opinion in India, therefore, crystallised in favour of rationalisation of administrative units, the objective was conceived and sought in terms of linguistically homogenous unity' (p. 10). What is decorously described as progressive public opinion clearly signifies the people referred to in the preamble of the Constitution. It meant that these people were not thinking in terms of citizenship, perhaps it was construed as one more word—what's in a name! It is however this word which is the nucleus of the Constitution, its significance and importance in achieving unity can never be over-emphasized.

While admitting these facts in the S.R.C. Report and yet to stress the historical homogeneity among the people, as it has been repeatedly suggested in the reports of the integration committees, leave an apprehension that the authorities concerned have not been able to resolve their conflicts of to-be-or-not-to-be type. This conflict is also reflected in the Report of the S.R.C. Under the caption Rationale for Reorganization it is observed: 'The demand for the reorganisation of states is often equated with the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces. This is because the movement for redistribution of British Indian provinces was, in a large measure, a direct outcome of the phenomenal development of regional languages in the nineteenth century which led to an emotional integration of different language groups and the development amongst them of a consciousness of being distinct cultural units' (p. 10). However, a few pages ahead we are reminded that 'further emphasis on narrow loyalties by equating linguistic regions with political and administrative frontiers, must diminish the broader sense of unity of the country' (p. 43). But then the broader sense of unity did not arise out of emotional integration of different language groups and this fact is admitted in the previous sentence!

Incidentally, the preamble of the Constitution of the U.S.A. appears to have taken cognizance of the facts that the makers of the Constitution were faced with. It opens as follows: 'We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union . . .'. The qualifying expression—in order to form a more perfect Union—is easier to understand. The founding fathers of U.S.A. Constitution were fully conscious of the distinctions and

differences in the groups of people who were to be integrated as a nation, and the preamble of the Constitution left no room for guess work. Provisions in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. (Art. 13) make it clear that it is a federal state comprising of a number of soviet socialist republics each containing a nationality, in the socio-cultural sense, though every citizen of a Union Republic is a citizen of the U.S.S.R.

. Chapter 8  
*LOOKING AHEAD*

ALBEIT IT MAY sound like a confession, we hesitated a good deal before deciding upon to add this chapter. We were faced with the question: could a student of psychology claim ingress into a field which by common consent may not be said to be his? In the preceding chapters efforts were made to scrutinize the claims of one Indian nationality and the arguments brought forward were of academical nature. We have examined the possible interrelationship between the ethnic groups that constitute the Indian population. The results arrived at were found to be at variance with the popular views expressed on this subject, nevertheless I have attempted to examine *de novo* the problems and offer my views. May it not prove hazardous to cross the rubicon?

A student of science not only possesses inherent interest in analyzing a problem, organic or material, social or historical, but he also aims at reaching a point of Q.E.D. He is desirous also of testing his findings, and prognostication he considers as his legitimate field of inquiry. At an earlier part of this century economists all over the world had to face unanimous criticism that though copious literature was published in the different fields of economics, the economists had failed to give predictive warning of the oncoming financial crisis that had engulfed the world in the thirties. The economists since then must have endeavoured to rectify their shortcomings since today they hold the position of modern oracles. Psychology till recently was torn into factions of schools and spent more time in matters of self-preservation than in making any positive contribution. It has since gone beyond, and this discipline can now dare to look

ahead; its subject-matter is no longer limited to logical conjectures since its premises have evolved from experimental treatment of the various psychosocial phenomena. It is in this spirit of looking ahead that the present chapter is added.

Out of the three psychosocial forces mentioned in the last chapter we find that one has survived intact and continues to thrive and grow in strength. This in common vocabulary is labelled in unelegant terms as regionalism. The word region as defined in the dictionary means nothing more than 'a tract of country, space, place, of more or less definitely marked boundaries or characteristics'; for example a desert or a fertile piece of land may be referred to as region. This way of referring to a state, its people, their desires and aspirations reveals unrealistic and unscientific attitude towards the whole problem. States have come into existence under lawful means, their languages are acknowledged by all and to refer to the people as regional is not appropriate, it reflects undecorative gesture. These so-called regional people are Indian people and it is not their fault that they were born and brought up in a certain state, spoke its language from birth, imbibed its culture and manners. This regional citizen has his own pride of the past—and who hasn't and who doesn't possess a secret yearning to see the culture of his state respected by others? It is difficult to see why a Tamil or a Punjabi, a Marathi or a Bengali should fight shy of calling himself what he actually is. This rather squeamish way of facing facts reminds one of the puritanic notion once exhibited towards sex and now discarded as unjustifiable. Continuance of this attitude may lead to the fostering of an undesirable feeling of inferiority and that too for no plausible reason. To expect a person to forget his state culture would very much look like the attitude of the old-fashioned physician asking his patient to forget about his illness; of course this analogy should not be pressed too far. Looking at it from this point of view it would not be reasonable or psychologically justifiable to expect a person not to be remindful of his state culture, this would be tantamount to taking a negative attitude towards the problem of integration which is likely to lead to psychological futility and confusion. With fresh attempts made to create an one-India or all-India culture there will grow added frustration and disappointment.

At the same time it may be said that infusion of the spirit of toleration need not be tied down to *dharma*, the spirit of co-operation will inevitably have to face the spirit of competition based on principles of equality in the eyes of law. The army, navy and the air force are institutions employing the largest number of persons recruited from different states and yet they have continued to remain free from ethnological conflicts or religious chauvinism, and these institutions do not have to make specific efforts for toleration to grow in their personnel, it is inherent in these services.

It is possible that this kind of didacticism may give rise to misgivings in the minds of many since this may be held tantamount to advocating and encouraging the detested 'regionalism'. After all to advise the people to think themselves in terms of what they actually are is negation of the principle of thinking in terms of what they are *not*, and the latter is the chief remedy offered by the zealots of integration, but the fears are unfounded. After living together for over a thousand years people in the United Kingdom remain English and Scottish, Irish and Welsh and they are not ashamed of their nomenclatures either. They claim to be British by law, ethnologically there is nothing that can be described as British. Again, to hold that social reactions among all the men governed by the Constitution of the United States are similar would only reveal one's ignorance. It would strain one's imagination to believe that once a person accepts U.S.A. citizenship he is put at par with the Bostonian. As a matter of fact the U.S.A. is not free from her own problems of integration even though the Constitution there is about 180 years old. Maybe the problem there is not so acute as it is in India nevertheless this problem does exist. Sometimes the problem appears in an effervescent manner as seen in relation to the Negroes. At times the problem is shelved as by granting reserved territories to the American Indians. Again, there are occasions when there arise abrupt indications of the problem having deep roots and this is what we saw in the treatment meted out to the Americans of Japanese origin who had lived there for more than one generation. Following the attack on Pearl Harbour all the Japanese-born American citizens inhabiting the Pacific coast were unceremoniously pushed two hundred

miles inside the coast and lodged within camps under military surveillance. Appearing before a Senate Committee, General DeWitt had made a downright statement: 'A Jap's a Jap. I don't want any of them here.'\* It is however gratifying to note that this attitude was later deprecated by all the sane persons in the U.S.A. since it violently affected the citizens' sense of security.

As far as India is concerned facts go to show that the stage is set for further cultural diffraction. Foretelling is not the pastime of the psychologist but he will be within his rights to prognosticate on the bases of factual evidence. If the facts that have been narrated in the previous chapters be not erroneous then it can be safely asserted that there is no plausible reason to expect the state cultures to be gradually merged in order to produce the effects of a homogeneous landscape. Not only that, each spectral colour will inevitably grow more sharply differentiated from the rest, probably some of these will produce further differentiation within their own sphere. Now, what should be the appropriate nomenclature to designate this kind of social segmentation?

The expression that is often used for labelling cultural diffusion is *regional* but this term bears different meaning in different contexts. To call something regional there must be something to designate as central since regional is a comparative term. The word black cannot signify anything in the absence of an experience of white.' To speak of regional language or culture we must be told what is central language or culture. Hindi is as much of a regional language as is Telugu or Assamese, nor there is any standard culture against which Tamil or Marathi culture could be evaluated. Besides, the word region does not demarcate in the way the boundary of a state is demarcated. To speak of southern region is understandable, but what meaning south could convey apart from its being opposite to north? The word regional embraces a tinge of puerility and it may be advisable to eschew this expression. It would be more dignified to use the word state instead of region; 'the expression state culture or language offers more clarity than the terms regional culture or language.

\* *Time News Magazine*, 11 August 1961.



It may be asked: would not the introduction of this concept of state culture or laying emphasis on it lead to the strengthening of sectarianism and chauvinism? Would we not thereby destroy the dream of building one-India? Would not this lead to a sort of Balkanization? To offer a dispassionate answer we have to guard against our being driven by sentimentality. The fear of wrecking one-India is baseless since that India stands on the invulnerable foundation of the Constitution. This political India should be viewed separately from the imaginary India of unitary language and culture. The first India is an established fact, the second India is a pleasant dream. The first India stands on the solid rock of realism, the second is inundated with fantasy. From what has been explained before it ought to be convincing that state culture and state language will continue to thrive; as a matter of fact it would prove calamitous if it did not, the people in such a state will lose their moorings. The man who is not rooted in his soil is to be dreaded as a man who has lost his past and this we had witnessed during the first flush of the refugees pouring into India.

Love for one's own culture and language is not chauvinism, it is natural human urge, it is destroyed when the man is destroyed. Bellicose jingoism, and that is what chauvinism means, is not a natural urge, it is a sort of psychological perversity which has its roots elsewhere. It can thrive only at the cost of others' feelings related to their survival. To deal with perversity there are available remedial measures. It will be fanciful to deny that English culture has not its strong points; what however the Indians did not like was the imperialist jingoism on the part of the rulers who mocked and decried Indian culture. But the process is not dead. The Assamese do have a healthy respect for the Bengali language and culture, what they dislike is the common Bengali attitude of slight displayed towards the Assamese language and culture, and this is quite justifiable. The fact is that each state is bound to improve in its own culture and language and as an historical inevitability these will develop on their own lines. Stateism, if this expression could be pressed into service, in one form or another is a psychological phenomenon which has continued to exist all through history and in all the countries. When Shelly wrote:

Hail to the crown by Freedom shaped—to grid  
 An English sovereign's brow! and to the throne  
 Whereon he sits!

it did not create riots between the Scottish people and the English. Dante's *Divine Comedy* provides us with some amusing though instructive illustrations. Even while sauntering towards the boiling pit Virgil could not help inquiring:

‘Tell me about the others:  
 Do you know anyone beneath the pit  
 Who is Italian?’. (Canto 22)

Further up Virgil asks Libicocco:

‘Who was that soul from whom, you said just now,  
 You parted lucklessly to come to shore?’  
 ‘That was Friar Gomita’ he replied  
 . . . Here in his company Michael Zanuck  
 Of Logodoro; never do their tongues  
 Grow weary talking of Sardinia.’ (Canto 22)

It is an irony that fear of social differentia should be raised when ample provisions have been made to foster ‘regionalism’. A child at school begins his literary career in his mother tongue and this is what is to be expected. When history is taught to him the beginning is made at the state level and emphasis willy-nilly will have to be on the local characters. If one asked a few questions to himself perhaps the issues will grow in clarity. Will a teacher in a school at Satara treat Shivaji's character in the same way as his opposite number in a school at Guntur or Burdwan? Will Akbar be similarly portrayed by a Muslim teacher at an Aligarh school compared to a Brahman teacher at Tanjore? Will the Battle of Plassey convey the same feelings in the hands of a Bengali teacher in Bengal as of a Goan teacher in Goa? Could the story of *Nal Damayanti* be expected to be narrated in U.P. in the same spirit as in a Christian school in Kerala? A geography teacher in the Punjab will speak of the Bhakra dam in a spirit which cannot match its description in a class-room in Mysore. A book on literature containing the lives

of Tagore and Vallathol, Lajpat Rai and Tilak will not, and cannot receive exactly the same treatment in the hands of teachers in the different states.\* Lest this be dispensed with as a mere psychological conjecture some results of an experiment may briefly be stated here. A group of university students was selected for their close resemblance in their intellectual and mental make-up including their viewpoints. This group was divided into two equal sub-groups. These sub-groups were taught history for six months under two different teachers one of whom was conservative and the other radical in outlook. The syllabus was centrally framed and every attempt was made to see that both these teachers taught according to the standard method prescribed for the occasion. After a period of six months the two groups of students were examined with reference to their political attitudes. Using suitable statistical techniques it was found that the respective groups of students had distinctly imbibed their teachers' attitudes.

To continue, a child as he grows will have his education in his home state if the decision of using 'regional' languages at the college level is implemented. Later on, he will have to seek a job in his own state because all-India jobs will be few for him, language issue may stand as an obstacle for a Gujarati to find employment in Tamilnad. During all these years he will be ceaselessly fed on the literature of his own state, will listen to the music of his own state, will celebrate festivals of his own state, and so on. What attitudes should we naturally expect to grow in him? The answer may be given in the oriental style by using analogy. Suppose a garden is raised where the seedlings of guava and mango, pineapple and orange are sown; each plant is then looked after tenderly and its specific requirements are carefully met. Would it be reasonable to expect in the course of time that these trees produced *not* guava or mango, pineapple

\* 'There appears to be a blithe and almost innocent unawareness of this discrepancy in the way in which personalities—historical and contemporary, good, bad or indifferent—of all-India stature are, in a manner of speaking, co-opted to serve a strictly regional interest. Nothing that a politician says on integration will inhibit him in the least from such regional exploitation of personalities that belong to India as a whole. Shivaji in Maharashtra and Rabindranath Tagore in West Bengal suffer particularly from a kind of adulation that is entirely inconsistent with any genuine integration' (*The Times of India*, 19 May 1963).

or orange, but only *fruit*? The concept of the *Indian* is equivalent to the concept of fruit.

From what has been said up to now one would be led naturally to draw the conclusion that we may not expect any sense of cohesion and unity developing in this peninsula, that the word Indian would remain vague and bizarre to represent some ethnic groups disjointed in their interrelationship. Someone might ask: 'Oh, then it means we are heading for Balkanization! (How word memories linger long! The word Balkanization is still being retained in our vocabulary when each of the territories there is fast growing in its own way). However these apprehensions may be set aside as false conjectures.

India no doubt will remain divided on cultural level but will remain united on the legal plane. Unity in the socio-cultural sphere unfortunately has been over-emphasized at the cost of the means of unity amply provided in our Constitution. As Frank Boas has said, 'It is our general experience that attempts to develop general laws of integration of cultures do not lead to significant results', warning at the same time that 'It should be clearly understood that historical analysis does not help us in the solution of these questions' (71). Instead of making futile attempts for cultural integration a good deal more could be done in developing national consciousness using the tools provided in the Constitution. 'The Constitution of India provides for a single and uniform citizenship for the whole of India. Birth within the territory of the Indian Union, descent from Indian parents, or residence for a period of five years at the commencement of the Constitution entitles one to be a citizen of India. . . . The right to equality includes equality before the law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and equality of opportunity in matters of public employments'. Never before in the history of India, either during the Hindu, Muslim or the British reign, have the people been given shelter under law as this Constitution does, never before an Indian had the unique privilege of being called a citizen of the Free, Sovereign Republic of India.

Let it be recalled that it was by way of providing equality of rights in certain respects that the British in the earlier part

of their regime had commanded faith in their sense of justice.\* This actually is the main source of all forces which could maintain unity. People in the past, in the pre-1947 days, looked yearningly and unequivocally towards this very instrument. Hardly any political leader had failed in the past to pull this trigger to bring out the desired reactions in the masses, expected reactions against injustice, against the lawless laws of the British. Moving in the crowds of men and women at Calcutta on that night of August, 1947, while sharing in their outbursts of joy, the present author as a student of psychology repeatedly had asked himself: what could it be that these people now desired? What is the picture of their expectations? Are they taking part in a mass hysteria or enjoying a big *tamasha*? The national flag hoisted over the Governor's House did not evoke any feeling of revenge against the past perpetrators of crimes. There was no tension in the expectations among the people, there was a distinct sign of relaxation. No image of dams and hydels hung before their minds. They did not think in terms of employment for all including the paralytics and the disabled lying in the hospital. Nor did they believe that luxury would be had for the mere asking. They could not have possibly imagined of days of high taxation and no gold. The answer that the author had from his freely conversing with hundreds of persons during that historical week can be put in one sentence: *justice will now prevail*. It was a very natural expectation. A dangerous expectation too.

## II

During this century each time a political mass movement was launched it contributed its share towards the creation of the largest chain of human affinities in this country; it was a huge

\* It was in 1950 that the author heard two persons in a rural area in Bengal quarrelling over some personal issues. As it happens on such occasions one of them may have been wrong. The other party was heard shouting 'how did you dare? Do you think the Company's law has ceased to exist?' The ignoramus was oblivious of the fact that the good John Company had gone under liquidation long ago, but the imagery of 'Company's law' has survived. This 'Company's law' must have left deep impression in the mind of the men against the background of the lawless laws of the government that existed prior to the advent of the Company.

circle of all-India kinship that came to be constructed. If one could project into the past one might still hear the whispering echoes, 'Are you Hindu? Muslim? Punjabi? Telugu? Adivasi? Poet laureate? Never mind, we all want the British to go'. In other words existence of the differences were acknowledged but were sunk to build a monolithic structure in one sphere and in one sphere alone.

With the withdrawal of the psychological threat which had loomed large in the minds of all, the cultural distinctions which lay dormant were bound to revert to their normal position. What had remained as latent now became manifest. That this hypothesis is correct was recently confirmed when the threat of foreign aggression from the north once more forged the all-India chain of links. Once again this unity was mistaken as a proof of national (cultural) integration which was unanimously applauded in the press and on platform; even the Prime Minister had on several occasions referred to it. All rejoiced at the integration that was supposed to have taken place overnight. To a student of psychology it appeared like a queer phenomenon—not the integration but the popular belief in it. There is a biological law that the organism which matures swiftly dies equally swiftly.

A couple of months later in an agonized tone it was widely confessed that all the good that had accrued was now gone with the winds. If left unanalyzed this kind of social *volte face* would no doubt appear perplexing. Beneath the veneer of an apparently *sudden* phenomenon there is a history which, if relegated to the background, the *suddenness* may be quite bewildering. This kind of illogical expectation and unpsychological outlook is very likely to lead to occasional outbursts of joyous optimism and then melting down to dismal pessimism and frustration; with each repetition of this drama of climax and anti-climax, despondency will take deeper roots.

Apprehension in the minds of the Indians caused by the Chinese invasion did not bring Mysore nearer to Maharashtra nor Bihar nearer to Bengal. This would have been easy to demonstrate if the Central Government at that momentous juncture had insisted upon regarding Hindi as the only national language in all the states. That sort of effort on the part of the authorities would have been opposed tooth and nail, aggression

or no aggression. The unity was not a symbol of inter-state unity, it was an expression of the shrinkage of the all-India bond with reference to the laws affecting all the citizens of India. All the people in all the states have unequivocally expressed their solidarity to stand behind the *central government*, it was a massive display of faith on the *laws* which had made the inhabitants to be known as *Indian*. Communities vied with each other to show their determination to fight back the aggressors and fight as Indians and not as members of a particular linguistic or cultural group. Politicians habitually looked upon the Punjab as a problem state. The impression that had gained outside this state was that a Punjabi's loyalty to his state government was delusive, a person in position could always be expected to change sides. Yet, it was in the Punjab that demonstration of loyalty took a phenomenal pattern. The local defence committees when went round to collect gold, so much then needed, the people did not ask questions, no receipts were issued, they just gave. It was from this truncated state that the largest number of recruits joined the army. This once maligned state stood out as a remarkable example of magnanimity and patriotism. But all these expressions of patriotism had bearing on the authority vested with the central government. If Delhi was lost all would be lost and it was this sort of mental reflection that had roused the men and women from lethargy in the Punjab as elsewhere. Some might say it was an emotional outburst, others might regard it as the product of deliberate thinking, that is not for us to discuss here. Our interest lies in probing into those factors which are significant in building up of an all-India attitude, not necessarily national. The crisis undoubtedly proved that the people while maintaining their ethnic difference could nevertheless project a clearly focussed pattern of Indianhood on politico-legal grounds. To emphasize on the former aspect in order to bring about integration, that is by trying to create one homogeneous cultural pattern, is very likely to prove a vain attempt, a psychologically improbable process. It is the second aspect that needs receive the maximum attention. We may pause here lest the natural temptation to teach the government a thing or two may supersede the objectives that are in view in this study. To tell the government what to do is the prerogative of the

know-all politicians, a student of psychology cannot permit arrogate for him that privilege.

What may be concluded from this discussion is that in order to find an explanation in a social change its antecedent conditions could not be ignored. While discussing the linguistic problems arising in this country a reputed scholar has lamented, 'the question of languages has taken up a controversial turn in Independent India, and that is a matter which is to be wholly deplored' (72). But then nothing happens suddenly, it is a matter of appearance, each social event has its own history. When the Constituent Assembly elevated the status of a so-called regional language to that of national language to represent all the languages and that too on the strength of one vote it meant that almost half the nation had expressed its disapproval, that the people had proved sagacious by refraining from taking any action that might have jeopardized the newly gained freedom, and that a huge controversy was shelved for the time being, but it was there all the same.

Let us now examine the side effects of demarcating the states on the basis of language and thereby defining the cultural boundary. The socio-political effects have been quite a few and we may select here one or two issues of some significance.

One baneful effect of the domicile system introduced by the British had resulted in putting a damper on competition and this acted as a serious obstacle to the free flow of talent. This system instead of dying out now appears to have gained a fresh lease of life, and may in the long run produce many more repercussions. If the state language be introduced in official correspondence within a state it would indirectly but virtually ban the employment of persons belonging to other states within its territory. This would result in the extenuation in competition. Reducing the sphere of free competition will not only lead to lowering of the standards but may be tantamount to an encroachment upon freedom of equality—this is so psychologically even if it received legal sanction. This is likely to create a certain amount of damping of the spirit of competition. It is said that this need arises from administrative reasons, a contention which does not appear quite convincing. To give an example, it is not logically comprehensible as to why the states should have demanded a minimum number of judges of high



courts to be selected from their own states. The duty of a judge does not require him to be well versed in the sociology or politics of that state, nor its literature. His judgment will be based upon the facts made available to him by the legal representatives of the litigants. Besides, the British judges discharged their duties without any acquaintance with the Indian languages. It would be idle to deny that Britain's supreme contribution to India was the judiciary system. It appears that the reasons may lie deeper and the arguments raised on grounds of administrative convenience may not be all that meet the eye. This kind of intra-state pull is ascribed to various factors like parochial feeling of belongingness to a state, caste, etc. But this psychological feeling is not a monopoly of Indian conditions.

### III

The caste system in India has earned sinister reputation all over the world. The more frequently it is repeated outside India the more firmly is the idea ingrained in our minds, the more it is lamented and the more we grow a feeling of helplessness. Caste is psychologically defined as 'a group of persons set apart—originally by occupation, later by religious sanctions and by economic or legal privilege—so that its members are non-marrying with outsiders and are limited in other associations'. The definition implies that caste system may have religious or social sanction. In other words, caste system can be as effective when it is backed by social or economic motives. The same lexicographers\* have explained the 'colour caste' as 'social separatism based on skin colour'. In the U.S.A. it applied especially to Negro-White relations. 'Colour caste' is described as 'less rigid than the Indian caste system, but is generally more rigid than social class'. It may be left to the world to judge whether the colour caste is less rigid in the U.S.A. than the religious caste system in India.

What goes by the generic name of caste constitutes the expressions of class distinction in the society, it is an inevitable product of social stratification based on one psychological criterion or

\* A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms by H. English and A. English.

another. This distinction may have as its basis religion, religious sect, social position, economic status, cultural distinction or any of the multifarious factors involved, not excluding pigmentation of the skin, and psychologically it makes little difference. What to speak of the Americans, an English mother may not feel quite joyous to see his son marrying a Negro or a Red Indian woman and this distinction comes from birth. Entry of Negroes to certain American educational institutions continues to be prohibited which would not be tolerated in caste-ridden India, this too is owing to birth. Marriage between a peer and a commoner in England is not viewed with a casual glance. The caste of the mythical Aryans in Germany was no less ruthless if not downright barbaric compared to casteism practised among the Hindus. The marriage ceremony of a Zoroastrian with a non-Zoroastrian will not be solemnized by a Zoroastrian priest neither a person of any other religion can be initiated to the Zoroastrian religion. This is also casteism. Restrictions are also observed in church marriage between a Protestant and a Catholic or Syrian Christian. It is not intended to raise here ethical issues nor are we discussing the propriety of maintaining caste distinctions. What is intended to be examined is: is it true that Indian social conditions are unique in the technique of dividing men into social groups based on caste? The answer will have to be in the negative. There is a considerable body of evidence to show that distinctions in caste were observed outside India among peoples of various religious groups and nationalities (73). Distinction by birth is still maintained in several countries besides India and efforts are being made simultaneously to resolve this conflict mostly by legal means.

Caste formation in India bears two different facets which ought to be viewed separately. One is based on *varna* which has existed since ancient days. The other form of caste system is based on professions, totems, taboos, etc., i.e. class distinction maintained on other grounds than purely religious. It is the first type of casteism which provides a greater source of danger. Casteism based on creed or *varna* implied a sort of hereditary social status thereby reducing social intercommunication. A Brahman on his own grounds claimed superiority over the non-Brahmans just as Muslims once reckoned themselves to be socially superior to the Hindus. In this way the scope for com-

petition was reduced and the best in each community could not be used for the betterment of the Indian community as a whole. By abolishing the caste system, at any rate of the former type, the Government certainly has taken a revolutionary step forward. What could not be achieved by the preachings of the innumerable saints and preachers was enacted in one sentence. However, solution of the second type of caste, those based on profession or those existing in the different regions states, is not easy to find. The state can do nothing if a person refuses to marry a woman of another caste; if a Bhil refuses to marry a Gond girl no action could possibly be taken against any nor will the society be adversely affected in a serious way. The state can take cognizance of such cases where a person by virtue of caste and creed is denied the same opportunity as another person or where the fundamental rights of a citizen are in jeopardy. We feel reasonably assured that in course of time as people with grievances begin to assert their rights the first type of casteism will gradually exert less influence on the society; it may not die out completely but it would cease to produce its baneful influence in paralyzing the nation. A Muslim can no longer be denied his place in a eating house and a teacher can be severely dealt with for maintaining caste distinction in a school.\*

Incidentally, there exist certain psychological gaps in our understanding of the government's policy towards casteism. According to Article 16(2) of the Constitution, under the Right of Equality, all the citizens are provided equal opportunity in matters of any employment or office under the state. At the same time, according to the same Article, Clause 4 gives certain preferential treatment to what is described as 'backward class of citizens'. Now, what actually determines backwardness of a class of people? By what yardstick the backwardness is to be judged? How long will such classes continue to remain back-

\* 'The headmaster of the girls' high school at Venganoor, near Trivandrum, was today sentenced by the District Magistrate to pay a fine of Rs. 101 or in default to undergo simple imprisonment for one month under the Untouchability Act. The Government had launched the prosecution against the headmaster, Mr. K. Ramchandran Pillai . . . for forming an extra division solely for Harijan students in the ninth standard in June last' (*The Indian Express*, 29 May 1963).

ward? What is worse still, by labelling a community backward are we not perpetuating a sense of inferiority in the members of a community, and also casteism? These are some of the questions that are liable to be raised in the minds of the laymen though the government may be in possession of facts to offer its own explanations. It is difficult to see how the Khasis and Nagas in Assam could be distinguished from any 'progressive' group of people in that state. Do the Todas need cultural protection? By giving preference to the so-called backward people a curiously anomalous situation is created. We often come across in advertisements published under the auspices of one governmental authority or another stating that other conditions being equal preference will be given to the candidate of a backward tribe or scheduled caste. In such cases tossing a coin to take a decision perhaps would be more reasonable. The 'other conditions' can seldom be the same. There are so many criteria to be taken into account in selecting a candidate that two persons fulfilling the requirements *exactly* in the same manner is statistically improbable. In fact it is tacitly assumed that a certain amount of consideration will be shown to the unfortunate person whom we have decided to call backward. One plausible suggestion may be to remove the disadvantages attached to backwardness by extending all possible facilities for free education to all the deserving candidates of the so-called backward classes so that no complaints may be raised against lack of opportunity. When however it comes to selecting candidates for a post no discrimination whatsoever should be made. This issue gains in importance because of the fact the Government is showing increasing concern for talent in the country and therefore discrimination shown in any way whatsoever will prove detrimental.

It is however the second type of casteism mentioned above which is difficult to eradicate. Let me hasten to add that the word caste here is used because there is no other suitable synonym. By casteism here is meant any form of social in-group formation based on hereditary criteria. Looking at it in this way, the effect of psychological affinity created by language or dialect also leads to particular language or dialect caste. Further, each caste may have its own sub-castes providing with the picture of concentric circles of which we have discussed

before. Whether we deplore this feeling of affinity or use epithets against casteism is another matter but the fact is that this sort of psychological bondage has noticeably hardened during recent years. All that we could do here is to make an effort to locate the plausible conditions which might have generated such feelings of casteism.

IV

The type of casteism that we have in view bears a close resemblance to the craft-guilds that came into existence in Europe during the thirteenth century. By modern standards casteism is functioning more on the lines of close-shop trade unionism. This no doubt could be said to offer opportunities for enhancing bargaining power of the group but this would be a superficial explanation. In the feeling behind casteism there lies a priority in its appearing compared to the consciousness of bargaining power. The antagonistic tendency that exists between, say, the Bhumihars and the Chattris in Bihar, the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab, the Marathas and Brahmans in Maharashtra, or the Brahmans and the 'emancipated' in Tamilnad bears similar trends in its motivation. Superficially these offer an appearance of dichotomy based on religion or religious castes but on further analysis does not prove to be so. The feeling between a Gujrati and a Maharashtrian is not based on religion. All the non-Assamese in Assam are lumped together under the vexing category of 'foreigners' who are despised with unconcealed suspicion as usurpers in the sphere of jobs.

This feature of strengthening of a group, as noticed earlier, is a characteristic of fear of threat. If a community believes that its existence is threatened then the bond that binds the members of the community will shrink. This belief may or may not be based on factual grounds but the belief itself will prove a sufficient impetus to produce the results.

It may be argued here that if it is merely a case of belief and if it is only a psychological fear, which is behind the growing chauvinistic tendency then education, when widespread among the mass of people, will eradicate the evil. That is, with the increase in educational facilities the sectional tendency will be reduced. In fact it is just the opposite. Educational oppor-

tunities during the last one and a half decades have grown enormously with a simultaneous increase of the so-called regionalism. Logically, education is providing the spurts of sectarianism. Perhaps it is education which makes a person conscious of the need of 'standing together', if there be any need. Let us see if this hypothesis holds grounds for justification.

Eighty per cent of the Indian citizens are rural people. One who may have a minimum of acquaintance with these people would be aware of the fact that the agricultural people are not prone to move about. Assuming that some may, a conservative estimate of seventy-five per cent remaining mostly within their villages may not be contested. These unsophisticated villagers have little access to the outside of their own world. Telugu villagers do not visit the Punjab to secure a job of tilling the soil; as a matter of fact their conservatism in this respect is well known. Besides, they have scanty opportunity to come across people of other states unless their village falls on the border of the state. The limited contact that they may have with the neighbouring state may arise in the field of needs and through people considered educated. An example may make the point clear. Suppose village X had its water requirements from a canal passing by the village. 'Later at a higher level the decision may have been taken to the effect that the neighbouring villages, falling into another state, could share in the canal water. Now the inhabitants in village X will feel the water shortage and may come to know of the reasons through the people who may know more. A little slant in the latter's expressions may now create provocative feeling in the inhabitants of village X. 'You see, justice is being denied to our people!' would be the reaction and the attitude is now ready to grow united. Anyway, such cases are not frequent and on the whole the villages may be held as safe places in matters of stateism to take an ugly shape.

Neither does an unskilled labour take much interest in the inter-state matters. He has to face the naked competition of the brawn. An employer very often does not evince much interest in the community affiliation of his labourers. What is more important to the employer is whether the mazdoor can give in return the requisite amount of labour. It is mainly for this reason that the Biharis have displaced the Bengalis in the

backbreaking job in the jute mills in Bengal. In the tea gardens of Assam and Bengal one may come across all sorts of labourers (including those who have migrated from the distant Malabar) but the number of the non-tribal Assamese population, and also the Bengalis, employed in the tea gardens is negligible and none grumbles either. Incidentally, sectarianism among the working class is the least as we may witness in the way that the trade unions function.

In matters of skilled workers and technicians the industrialist cannot afford to pat his local patriotic pride since making profit in industry is his main concern. This state of affairs is likely to continue till India continues to advance towards rapid industrial expansion. For similar reasons sectarianism has not made much headway in the higher technical and professional fields where the individuals belong to independent professions. A number of East-Pakistan big-wigs continue to visit Calcutta for medical treatment just as a few Hindu Sindhi physicians in West Pakistan are in much demand compared to the Muslim physicians there. A litigant cannot afford to select a lawyer on any other grounds except on the latter's acumen in law though the question will be slightly different if two persons of similar merits were available, selection probably then will be made on other grounds.

Proceeding on the lines of elimination it is possible to spot out the areas where discord is at its maximum. It is however comparatively a very small segment of the total population whose members have received the requisite qualification for employment in sectors where supply has proceeded on a much faster scale than demand and competition has grown unusually keen. This segment comprises largely the middle-class employees though this nomenclature is not adequate.

Competition in the lower grades, for example in the clerical section in the government offices or in the mercantile firms has always remained in a chronic state but ethnological criteria have not created severe problems. It stands to reason that very few would feel sufficiently tempted to migrate from one state to another for a paltry sum of Rs. 100 a month; there may be exceptions but elimination of competition here has worked out in a natural way. It is actually in the spheres of employment, where movement from one state to another is possible, where

the potential employee by virtue of the standards in emoluments is prepared, even eager, to leave his home state and live elsewhere, that the problem of 'regionalism' begins to take shape. Yet there is no reason why this should be so.

Let us bear in mind that two significant changes related to employment have taken place since Independence. Firstly, the number of educational establishments, particularly those catering for the needs of higher education, has enormously expanded. For example, the number of universities alone has grown from 20 in 1947 to 53 in 1962. On similar lines have increased technical institutions of various categories though the proportion may not be the same everywhere. In less than ten years, between 1951 and 1959, the number of students attending the universities, research institutions, special educational colleges, etc., has more than doubled. Anyway, the fact is that opportunities for competition in obtaining employment have now been extensively increased.

The second fact is that the agencies for employing personnel have also increased and become diversified though not proportionately. These agencies as is well known are incapable of absorbing all the personnel, or even a substantial number, supplied by the educational establishments. What is more important is that purely governmental agencies no longer hold a sway over the employment sphere; the quasi-governmental agencies particularly in the states have grown in profusion. However these facts in themselves cannot explain the ethnic rivalry displayed in the field of employment. To seek for the reasons we have to divert our attention elsewhere.

As is well known competition for posts in the civil service during the British days was no less keen than what we find today. For each post in the Indian Civil Service the number of candidates sometimes rose to fifty and it was no less difficult to gain entrance in the provincial civil services. But selection was not made on the basis of castes barring in the offering of certain impetus to the backward classes. Distinction no doubt was maintained between the British and the Indian candidates but when it came to selecting the latter the authorities were not much concerned about the caste background of the candidate. It may be presumed that a similar attitude continues to be maintained in selecting candidates for the all-India services.



When a candidate in such a selection fails to give a good account of himself he has none to blame but himself.

To take another example, seldom have we heard against the judiciary expressing bias towards an advocate or a litigant on ethnic or caste grounds. If a judge of a high court, by virtue of the inflexible rules laid down for him, tried to thrust his personal likes and dislikes transgressing the limits set by the legal codes will be doomed professionally. Yet in the sphere of legal practice competition has always remained keen and no complaints are known to have been raised on grounds of casteism. In medical practice, at least in Bengal, supply for long has remained higher than the demand but little do we hear of ethnic issues being brought in to augment a doctor's chance of success even though such possibilities do exist in one way or another.

All this means that it would not be correct to lay the blame at the doors of unemployment alone even if it were on the increase since India never has enjoyed days full employment. It appears that there is something in the sphere of employment, in the actual acts of selecting candidates in a limited sector that may harbour potential sources of casteism gaining in strength. One may legitimately inquire whether it is in this sector that some kind of fear or threat is generating which may be responsible for bringing the members of a community closer together, and this is what we mean by 'regionalism', 'provincialism' or 'state-ism'. If a social community, large or small, may have reasons to believe that it failed to receive its dues it is liable to consider the occasion as a threat against its survival. It is not necessary to emphasize the fact that the educated Indian has grown a healthy sense of equity and propriety and this is to be expected. For centuries the people have been denied the psychological satisfaction of a natural urge which is common in all civilized human beings. We may add to this the factor of natural sensitiveness in the Indians; as we know they are quick to react. Taking these psychological issues into consideration we have also to bear in mind that the Press today represents a much more powerful instrument for disseminating news than hitherto was the case. Owing to the increased literacy and the literate people's alert interest in what is happening around him

that a news can get into circulation much faster and spread wider and the repercussions may not always be pleasant.

In other words, if a case could be made that in selecting candidates for public services or those to be employed under quasi-public service agencies, merit was not given due recognition and if this information gained in circulation then naturally faith on such agencies would be undermined. Though it is not easy to collect evidence of what may be called as just grievances it cannot be said that such complaints are without foundation. One may like to ask oneself what sort of impression might have been created in the minds of the newspaper readers when the utterance of a chief minister of a certain state, who in his life-time was reputed for his pride and vanity, was flashed in the local newspapers that he considered himself free to ignore the selections made by the State Public Service Commission. He had repeatedly made it clear on the floors of the Assembly that the Public Service Commission was merely an advisory body and he was not bound to abide by its decisions. A few more facts may be added here with the singular intention of seeking for the validity of the apprehensions raised earlier.

In a university two posts of professors in a department lay vacant for three years. The present author tried to induce a number of persons possessing suitable qualification to apply for these posts but none thought it fit to respond and the reply was unanimous—'they' will not take anyone outside the state. A person was being interviewed for the post of a lecturer at a university in the south whom we shall call K. Krishnamurty. As we know the last name in the south is what in the north is known as the first name and the first name is the surname, which also designates the caste of the person. A member of the interviewing committee asked the candidate to make clear what S stood for. The reply brought out an unconcealed grin among some of the members of the committee—why, the fellow unmistakably was a Brahman and so out he went though he was the most promising candidate. At another university in the north a professor was to be selected. One of the candidates hardly had any of the requisite qualifications, nevertheless a member of the committee who was eager to back this wrong horse desperately, and daringly, remarked: 'But sir we should consider the fact that the candidate belongs to this region'! Of course

the conscientious vice-chancellor gave a fitting reply but the diabolical statement had already been made. Further illustrations need not be given since the above are stated here only to test the hypothesis suggested before. It appears that there may be genuine cases giving rise to certain apprehensions. If this were ultimately found true and if further corroborative evidence were made available, which should not prove difficult, then the psychological reaction that would ensue would be something like this: if the right person has not been selected then why not I? If not I why not someone resembling me (not in looks though)? This resemblance and akinness may be based on religion, caste, state, district, and so on.

What is sometimes attributed to the economic conditions may also be traced back to the psychological source already mentioned. For instance it is believed that 'regionalism' is also the result of the widespread urge for economic development. The desire for economic development 'has really 'caught on and each region points to another region which received more money from the State or the Union Government' (3. 23). Economic development after all opens additional avenues for employment to the inhabitants of a state. The ministry in a state would no doubt gain in popularity if it could manage to provide a larger number of persons with employment but the authorities concerned would have to be brave indeed to declare openly that the posts would be filled only on the basis of merit and no obstruction whatsoever would be placed against anyone found suitable even if he were from outside the state. But this should be treated as hypothetical since the language barrier automatically reduces the means for wide competition.

The word justice is an omnibus expression. It no doubt entails a sense of objectivity which in its turn accepts conflicts with subjective likes and dislikes. A person when he endeavours to maintain an objective standpoint eventually means that he does feel ego-involvement but at the same time would like to tear himself away from this involvement, and this is easier said than done. To develop this attitude would have to be a long-drawn educative process which is a matter of significance to a vast community of people in India which in the past was not accustomed to look at things in this perspective. A common Indian essentially bears feudal outlook, India never had its in-

dustrial revolution as England had and which helped that country to bring about a sharp change in the outlook of her people. However, this education will have to start somewhere, actually it has already been started by giving a certain amount of power to the village *panchayats*, the power to think and act for themselves. But then in every educative process we notice the characteristic feature of miming or imbibing the ways of those who maintain a position of immediate superiority. We tend to learn more readily from what we may find others above us doing and we are positively affected by their ways of behaviour and are influenced comparatively little by what may be said by them, more so if the views stand in contradiction. This process of hierarchy in learning is almost universal and therefore may be expected to operate in the social sphere as well. Anyway, action is a more efficacious method in teaching particularly action emanating from the source held in esteem and recognized as authoritative. Once the feeling is ingrained in the mind that ability counts but amiability counts more in achieving success no amount of preaching sermons on righteousness would have desirable effects.

Every time a section of the population anywhere in the country takes to the ways of might-is-right the psychological fear is liable to gain in strength. The anti-Brahman demonstrations in Tamilnad, the anti-Muslim riots in Bihar and U.P., or the anti-Bengali hate movement in Assam helped immensely in strengthening the specific types of casteism. These fears could have been isolated and gradually destroyed at the right moment if vigorous action from the respective states were forthcoming. The fact is that requisite steps failed to be taken at the desirable moment to crush the anti-social activities with the result that the vulgar expression 'minority' gained ground. In the absence of a police force under the direct control of the Centre, each time an incident took place the Centre proved helpless. May it not be considered valid that each riot involving the minor and major sections of the population, any section of the population, contributed towards reducing faith in the Constitution? A religious riot annuls two important Articles in our Constitution. Article 14 makes it clear that 'The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India'. According to Article

15(1), 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them'. When an ethnic group in a State endeavours to drive out another group of people, Article 19(1) is violated; this Article lays down that 'All citizens shall have the right . . . to move freely throughout the territory of India' and also 'to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India'.

A common citizen finds it difficult to reconcile with the existing contradictions. When a community is faced with the dire peril of extermination or extradition by force how may it be expected to feel united by merely contemplating upon the arts and crafts of the other community or listening to its music in the radio broadcasts? The victim is more likely to ask himself: why should I be left at the mercy of the political caprices? Why must the gory memory of the remote past be revived all over again? If my country could afford to send soldiers to distant lands to maintain peace could it not have sent them to save me and my children? I do have faith in the Constitution of my country, I want to feel proud of it, I look forward to this sacred text bringing about unity in my motherland, why should they take away my faith, my pride, my future? After all, there is only one worse thing than injustice, and that is justice without her sword in her hand.

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At the end of our trail, looking back we find little justification to hold that India in the past had enjoyed integrated living on the bases of equity and propriety. There was no need felt to treat the masses of the people at par since ample provisions were made in the Hindu and Muslim theology to maintain social stratification. Even though this set of ideas may today be looked upon as an abject evil nevertheless it did exist and has no doubt left its mental traces; traditions die hard and are not easy to eradicate. Whatever principles may now have to be employed to bring about integration will have to be done with our gaze fixed ahead, there is little inspiration that we can derive from looking back. The new atmosphere has to be accepted and cherished as our proud heritage to be. It may not be out of place to make a few brief reviews of the nature of attempts that are being made in this direction.

The most common method that is employed aims at exploiting human sentiments; this may be termed as *bhai-bhai* approach. Human sentiments are our cherishable possessions but they have their own limitations. How futile this method is was amply demonstrated in the international sphere with reference to our immediate neighbours. India and China are not close together even though numerous Chinese scholars and pilgrims had visited this country in ancient days. Accepting the fact that there cannot be any cultural line of demarcation between the Indians on the one hand and the Pakistanese, Ceylonese or the Nepalese on the other, the principles of common law, common government and unified territory have drawn up the *gestalts* of oneness feeling in each of these countries and the dissimilarity and disparity are likely to be further crystallized and consolidated. What is true in the international sphere is partly true in the intranational sphere as well with the differences that the Indian Constitution is an available force that can produce among the multitude of ethnic groups in India the feeling that they belong to this country.

However, for some reason or another emphasis seems to have been laid on the 'good brother' approach. Taking for an example, we may make mention of the frequently organized inter-state musical and cultural festivals and, also, the music of the various states broadcast through the radio network. One may like to inquire as to what may be the psychological expectations behind such festivals—of rapprochement between the different ethnic groups or as means of acquainting them culturally? If the latter is the case, then the method surely is justifiable; a Bengali or Bihari thereby comes to know of the Tamil or the Malyali cultural modes and this process has certain values of its own. If however these means of entertainment are aimed at serving the purpose of bringing about all-India cohesion then we can only await despondency in the future. By listening to Japanese music over the radio or visiting a performance of Russian ballet an Indian would hardly feel closer to Japan or Russia. As a matter of fact he would listen to the music or visit a performance provided he does not harbour any antagonistic feelings against the other community. In other words these supposed means of unity are the ends in a way. Whether he may enjoy them or not is a different issue but acquaintance

does not guarantee mental affiliation. Educated Indians are accustomed to the Euro-American cultural ways and the so-called western culture was pumped out on the Indian soil for a couple of centuries but does an average educated Indian thereby feel closer to a Hungarian or an Italian compared to the Pakistani or Ceylonese?

The second type of approach is mainly technical in nature and by way of an example we may cite here the suggestions and recommendations made by the Emotional Integration Committee. This Committee after serious deliberations for days together finally devised no less than two hundred and thirteen ways of bringing about emotional integration and a few random samples are selected here for perusal.

'1. It is necessary to evolve an effective national policy in education, the implementation of which will bring the States and the Union Territories closer together. For this, in any matter of educational policy of an all-India character, the Centre, on its own motion or at the instance of the States or statutory bodies like the University Grants Commission, should confer with the State Governments and other interested parties and arrive at a decision in consultation with them. Such a policy arrived at by majority decision' shall then become an all-India policy and States shall necessarily follow it.

'26. Towards expanding pre-school education steps should be taken for the establishment of play centres for the pre-school age-group 3-5 years. Such centres should be provided in all mills and factories.

'51. Films for high school children should include documentaries on some of our important educational institutions and on what is done by children in other parts of the world.

'76. The University Grants Commission should institute research fellowships for the purpose (of helping towards greater understanding of and sympathy with different religious faiths).

'101. The Junior Red Cross should be given every encouragement to flourish and its activities spread among as many schools as possible.

'126. The present syllabus of the workers' training course may be modified to include general lectures on the cultural heritage of India, the diversity of her trade and handicrafts and her natural wealth.

'151. Every geography student in training colleges should have basic training in the use of audio-visual material and a thorough training in the use of geographical maps.

'176. Potential talents in teachers should be developed by training them in the technique of writing text books.

'201. Brief, attractively illustrated booklets for children on various subjects of Indian economy and planning should be published.'

Reading these suggestions one might ejaculate: the more the merrier; but he would try in vain to find in these recommendations or in those offered by similar agencies ways and means of rehabilitating the fear and suspicion that have been accumulating in the minds of those concerned and these fall within the domain of emotion. What is of greater significance is that these recommendations are all based on *a priori* hypotheses and no attempt has ever been made to start with a fact-finding survey to assemble factual evidence on the basis of which alone suggestions could have been scientifically made.



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